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The Logic of Lies

R. LESTER MONDALE

Were the avowedly anti-democratic military powers of today the only threat to the eventual realization of the egalitarian dreams of the Jeffersonian-Jacksonian era, Americans might well be able to grapple the war problems and face future eventualities with no little equanimity. Far more threatening than external military aggression, however, is the strychnine diet of lies on which our minds are regularly fed and on which no democratic electorate can long continue democratic. The long harped-upon and systematically ingrained lies, commonly believed in 1940, about Russia's morale, military equipment, leadership, and economic system have been explained away by another facile lie, that the adverse propaganda was primarily the work of Herr Goebbles and others. Still fresh, and still virulent are the lies about Spain, which reduced the recent civil war to a mere conflict between communists and fascists. Effective once, but conveniently buried now, were the lies about German power in 1938 and early 1939 with the consequent slogan, "Call Hitler's bluff." And well on the way to interment are long-propagandized and assiduously broadcasted lies, by an innumerable swarm of temporarily authoritative foreign correspondents omnisciently in possession of the "inside" of every mind and every event, about Japan's inherent economic weaknesses, her state of desperation, the inevitability of her imminent collapse, about the almost certain prospect of "whipping the Japs in two weeks."

The foregoing misrepresentations of reality are glaringly arresting. These, however, are mere foreground items in the inferno scene that unfolds as we glance at the larger outlines of the contemporary picture. In the immediate background is the big-

business and increasingly monopolistic institution, the daily press, an "8% business"—William Allen White's classic characterization—serving first and foremost the needs and interests of other equally gargantuan 8% firms (serving particularly those which specialize in "good-will" advertising). Hence the inability of the electorate to get an adequate picture of labor conflicts in areas where repression is rife, of share-cropper injustices in regions similar to that represented by Martin Dies. Allied with the social-economic interests of the 8% firm is the flagrant advertising lie—the original "big lie" that originated with Allied propagandist advertising men in the last war and that now has become the absolutely untrammeled lie about vitamines, breads, cosmetics, tobaccos, gasolines, etc., etc., emblazoned from billboards at every turn of the way, blaring from millions of loudspeakers, and interlarding all pages of daily news. Still farther and more massive in the background of the picture is the ominous sight of the pathetic consummation of education by lies—a people so completely indifferent to and oblivious of standards of truth that in a matter of weeks "the devourer of Finland," the "totalitarian dictator," "the Hitler partner," the "butcher Stalin," can become the "jolly old dog," "our partner in democracy," and the "saviour of civilization." This striking mental about-face and the pathetically unstable and malleable mentality from which it derives are to be credited in no small part to the unscrupulousness of interested newswriters and advertisers, and their cavalier indifference to standards of truth. An even larger measure of credit, however, must go to the masses themselves—their altered desire to believe differently about Stalin and Communism.

Taken as a value, the accurate depicting of reality or truthfulness, concerns only secondarily, if at all, both the interested producer of reading matter that ostensibly pictures the contemporary situation, and the interested consumer. In the first case the criterion for the evaluation of what is produced for mental consumption is merely its propagandistic effectiveness; in the second case, the criterion is its power to comfort. Thus intimately coupled with the deliberate coloring or neglect of information to serve the needs of corporate interest is the equally sinister disregard of standards of truth to serve the needs of mental ease and quiet. Hence in a political campaign the predominant appeal is brazenly

and unashamedly that of hillbilly bands, "wisecrack" slogans, and "campaign oratory." The electorate, fed by almost the entire press of the nation on a diet of misinformation and vilification of the New Deal efforts, revolted successively at the polls. But the revolts, far from being a credit to the devotion of the mass mentality to standards of honesty and truth, were primarily expressions again of belief by desire and by immediate economic need. News purveyors, moreover, are not above pandering; witness the news handling of and editorializing on the progress of the war. Servile to the public demand for reassurances and for an easy, quick and glorious victory the majority of those at the sources of information have made each defeat in turn "inconsequential," each retreat "glorious" and "heroic," and at every pause of the opposition for breath, however few hours or few days, they have made the pause with miraculous rapidity into a marvelously reasoned symptom of the manifest impossibility of further advance, of shortages in men and materials, of exhausted last efforts, of collapse, revolution, and the inevitable assassination (or cancerous death) of Hitler and Mussolini!

Our era is thus dominated by, and typified by the anarchistically *uncontrolled lie*. This anarchy, except for an occasional official gesture towards censorship of war news and except for the vast increase in government propaganda, almost completely dominates the national scene. And in this anarchical control (8% business genuinely fearful of labor, of encroaching totalitarian methods, and of a socialistic future—advertising in the anomalous position of supporting the buying of bonds and at the same time of keeping civilian buying at least at its normal level—the masses demanding ease of mind and soul) there is neither effectiveness for an all-out war effort nor means for the support of democracy which presupposes above all else an accurately informed electorate. Hence, the inevitable centrally *controlled lie* which has proved itself so politically effective and individually so comforting not only in enemy lands but also in that of America's most effective military ally.

The controlled lie has many immediate and obvious advantages, and against it the uncontrolled lie is for all practical, and perhaps for most theoretical, purposes, a weak and second-rate contestant. In time it must lose. The way for the coming dominance of the con-

trolled lie in America was well paved by the masses in the attitudes they picked up in their successive revolts against the anti-New Deal press. From these electoral revolts the masses acquired the notion that freedom of speech and freedom of press are now merely veils for the most part, or disguises behind which the uncontrolled lie would conceal itself. Add to this disillusionment with the 8%-business-lie the perilous element of instability contingent upon the mass demand for the comfortable war news lie, and the imminent triumph of the controlled lie seems assured.

The lie-situation put thus baldly, and not sugar-coated with the terms of cant, not called "propaganda," "education," "advertising," is altogether too reminiscent of the brazen and outspoken adoption of the lie-techniques discussed in *Mein Kampf* to be readily acceptable at its face value. We would be far more comfortable if we could make ourselves believe that constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech and freedom of press automatically transmuted uncontrolled lies into the truth. And we would be far more comfortable if we could cling to the callously moralistic idea that the war is simply a war between truth and error, between propaganda and fact. Since democracy and the controlled lie are manifestly incompatible, fighting for truth as against error would seem more like fighting for democracy.

But democracy and the uncontrolled lie are also incompatible. Thus the acceptable alternative is neither the uncontrolled lie nor the controlled lie. The only acceptable alternative, for all who are sufficiently imbued with certain antique virtues of the human race to regard a willful misrepresentation of reality or the spineless asking for misrepresentations of reality with abhorrence, is necessarily that which all past generations and all races have instinctively valued so highly—*truth*. The very mention of the idea of truth, however, smacks of naiveté. It smacks of the adolescent and sophomoric, of the dogmatic and the infallible, and of that special kind of truth that is opposed to "error" in the various sects of New Thought. Scientifically, the use of the word truth calls for extreme circumspection. What scientist can say that his measurements are sufficiently accurate and sufficiently extensive to be anything more than a statistical approximation to the final accuracy which alone is entitled to be blessed by the word *truth*? What is

truth and what is rationalization, ideology (either of the Marxian or the Mannheim varieties), or residue and accident?

When we take a bird's-eye view not only at the claimants to truth but also at those who are skeptical of our abilities to approximate the ideal in our representations of reality, we are tempted to regard truth and the claims to truth as among the biggest of all lies. To this reaction the academic sophist immediately answers that to scout the idea of truth is to assume and to affirm it as a possibility and a reality. Nevertheless the practical effect (which is certainly looming large in the framework of the contemporary state of mind) of the large claims made by dogmatists and propagandists and of adolescent minds to have approximated to the truth does not provide particularly reassuring evidence as to the possibility of its achievement. In practical experience the biggest lie is often if not usually that which parades as "the truth." Into all realms where there is any question of the approximation of the idea to the reality there invariably creeps that element which is so prominent in the latest of Reinhold Niebuhr's works. He himself, for instance, ably describes the fallacy of the philosopher who, looking back over the philosophy of the past, and seeing the errors of the past, constructs a metaphysical theory that seemingly overcomes those errors, and then assumes that future philosophers will not see his errors in the perspective in which he has seen his predecessors. Nevertheless, Niebuhr himself repeatedly grapples with the shortcomings of other men and of other schools of theology only to conclude, "but the truth is . . . "

However much the skeptic's seeing of the biggest lie in the truth may indicate affirmation of truth to the sophistical mind, the fact remains that herein lies the seed which, in very recent decades, has infested large areas of the earth's surface with the bramble bush of uncontrolled and controlled lies.

If, as has been suggested by the foregoing, we find the accepted idea or ideal of truth conducive to error and therefore an obstruction to the achievement of something like an adequate approach to reality, we are left with the imperative of making a re-study of the fundamentals of the logic according to whose tenets we have been conditioned to affirm the possibility of truth, to think of truth, and to pronounce judgment of truth or falsehood. Such logical categories as we unthinkingly rely upon evidently have not

enabled mankind to arrive at a satisfactorily reliable working knowledge of the nature of man, of his social organizations, his history, or his world. The reaction to this inadequacy is seen not only in the rise to dominance of organized lying over science in central Europe, but also in the widespread correlative reaffirmation of the folkloreistic revelations of Christianity and Judaism in lieu of seeming rationalistic-scientific inadequacies. Here again, if we look to the inadequacies of the logic in accordance with which the facts of science are organized rather than to the seeming inadequacies of "reason" and science as such, we may find that the facts are far more adequate than has been assumed or realized, and that the likely flaw in our failure to approximate truth about reality lies in the use of a system of logic which is incapable of organizing fact in such wise as will conform to the realities of the actual man and the actual world. Thus the root of our difficulties may be traceable not primarily to the evil machinations of corporate interests, not primarily to a general spinelessness of the mass, not primarily to those who would mitigate the hopelessness of uncontrolled lying with controlled lying. It is traceable above all to those academic sophisticates who are satisfied to rest supinely in the belief that truth is safe and secure because they have proved that truth derives from the very questioning of the skeptic that the truth might be a lie, and consequently to that folk-frame of mind which naively clings to the same logic whose concept of truth, by virtue of the shortcomings of the logic itself, makes the most vehement of claims to truth, the biggest of lies.

Effective Preaching

CHARLES E. PARK

If we could point to an age when Christian preaching has been really effective, it would be a simple matter to make a comparison and locate the deficiencies in modern preaching. No such age has been seen; perhaps never will be; but the preaching of some ages has been more effective than that of others. It might help to consider one or two of these.

Jesus of Nazareth was an effective preacher. It is easy to see why. He had an urgent and a definite message: the eternal worth of the individual soul. And he delivered this message at an opportune moment. With the Scribes and Pharisees, who looked upon spiritual worth as a class monopoly and resented having their prerogative turned into common property, his preaching was just the opposite of effective. There was reason for his calling them an evil and adulterous generation, stiff-necked, hypocrites, offspring of vipers, sons of hell. No man applies these terms of endearment to people with whom his preaching is effective. They were the ones he could not reach; and it was because they did not want to be reached.

The effectiveness of preaching, then, depends in a measure on the people. If they want to hear what is preached to them the message will come to them with double weight: the conviction of the preacher plus the responsiveness of the hearers. How to secure this responsiveness is one of the secrets of effective preaching. We like to think that Jesus possessed this secret as fully as it can be possessed; yet it did not work with the Scribes and Pharisees. We may be sure there will always be some with whom it will not work. The best we can do is all we can do.

For some men there is no difficulty here. They are born with a genius for being liked: St. John Chrysostom for instance. His sermons were homilies; labored, exhaustive explanations of the text; a squeezing of the last drop of juice out of the orange. To read them is dreary tiresome work. Yet he preached to thousands of eager listeners. In more recent times there is George Whitefield,

whose sermons are a puzzle. Their range was neither wide nor original. Of fresh and striking thought there was none. To read them in cold blood is dull business. But to stand within the galvanic field of his personality was an experience which no one could resist, not even such a hardened, self-controlled, sophisticated old war horse as Benjamin Franklin. Such men cannot help us. Their secret is one they did not learn themselves, and cannot teach to others.

Certain precautions, however, can be taken through which the preacher can learn how to avoid needless hostility in his hearers, and by which he can make himself respected, if not loved, by them. To be always sympathetic, perfectly fair, genuinely solicitous for their good, censorious only when he is sure that his censorings will have the corroboration of some forgotten voice of conscience within themselves; to hold them up to a standard which he may assume will be recognized by their own awakened intuitions; in short, to address himself in common courtesy to that best in them which he knows is there buried under the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, is to make himself a respected, ingratiating, long remembered preacher whose words will live for years after he is gone.

Christ's voice was silenced nineteen centuries ago, but he is still preaching; his words are still alive. Some of the reasons for their vitality may be factitious; the chief reason is that they are still vibrant with his sympathy, his understanding fairness, his clean love for souls, and his trust in the moral intuitions and spiritual capacities of the human heart. Some may argue that his effectiveness as a preacher seems to have been short-lived. It soon declined, even with the common people who at first heard him gladly. The reason is, perhaps, that he had but one chief answer for all their povertyes and problems. It was what he most valued for himself: his mystic bond of intimacy with his Father in heaven, close and warm and constant. With this bond intact, nothing else mattered much to him. He assumed that this mystic bond of reciprocal love and trust was as precious to others as it was to him. So when the sufferer came to him for aid, his first question was, Has this man's standing with God been impaired? And his first assurance was, Go in peace; thy sins are forgiven. This answer was given not only to those who suffered in mind or conscience;

it was given, for example, to the man sick of the palsy, and doubtless to others whose ailments were solely physical. With Jesus the first calamity to be feared was estrangement from God; and the first assurance to find and give was that the bond of mutual love was still intact. But all did not share this feeling. They wanted, not forgiveness for their sins, but a cure for their bodily ills. They insisted that he be their miraculous healer. He insisted that he was first of all the physician to their souls. This pulling at cross purposes soon led to his loss of popularity with the common people. His ministrations lacked that immediately practical quality which they demanded, and which every miracle worker and faith healer since his day has tried to acquire.

Yet we must admit that thanks to this very preoccupation with the things of the spirit, which lost him his hold upon his contemporaries, Jesus remains the world's supremely effective preacher in the long run. The things of the spirit are of perennial interest to human beings. They will listen to any one who treats conscientiously of such matters. They will listen to us today. They will more than listen,—they will enlarge and embellish and idealize until their beloved teacher becomes the reputed source of many a profound truth and gracious example of which he was actually innocent. This has happened to Jesus, and Lincoln, and Emerson, and to scores of others. And it suggests a canon of biographical appraisal which the fact-loving biographer (the de-bunker) will scorn: a man should have the credit for what he said and did and was, plus the extensions, elaborations, and idealizations which *something in him* influences other people to make concerning him. A man's true measure is what he was plus what people are prompted by something in him to attribute to him.

Whatever the fact-loving biographer may say, this opens up another field of effectiveness for those who would serve humanity: be not only a good and faithful servant in fact, be also in spirit an idealizable man. It was denied to Jesus to live out his natural span of life. We can only imagine what that life would have been; and it is better so. One crucifixion is enough for one Christianity. The fact derives much of its grandeur from its solitariness. Yet no one can compute the amount of influence Jesus still exerts as a memory carried out in terms of the hypothetical, as a teacher who "would have said," as an example who "would have done," in

short, as a beloved ideal. Remember you are on a pedestal. Accept the situation without shame and chagrin, but with gratitude and humility. Thank God that there is something in people that craves an ideal; and pray God that you may not frustrate that craving. If you cannot be an idealizable man, at least you can avoid being a non-idealizable man.

With very good reason we think of the Apostolic Age as revealing Christianity at its best. It is one of the few ages in which we see Christianity in action as well as in a string of words. Peter, Paul, Silas, Timothy, Barnabas, Lydia, Dorcas, and all the rest of them did some of their preaching with their mouths, but the bulk of it they did through their daily living. The result was irresistibly effective. They captured the civilized world. And they have left to us for our rueful contemplation the greatest single secret of effective preaching there is: reck thine own rede; be yourself what you recommend to others. From this Golden Age of Christianity when enthusiastic people listened to their enthusiastic apostles preaching as much through their lives and personalities as through their mouths, we pass on into a history of ups and downs the general purport of which has been to enlarge the preacher's opportunities and at the same time to increase his difficulties.

Dean Fenn used to say that in its origin Christianity is a laymen's religion. It was born in a layman's heart; it was spread by laymen among laymen, until it became the state religion of the Roman Empire. That event is one of the two great turning points in Christian history, the other being of course the Protestant Reformation. Shortly after the establishment of Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire, it was attacked by the distemper of insincerity. But, curiously, this distemper confined its ravages almost wholly to the clergy, where it reached such insufferable proportions that Christendom found itself convulsed in the Protestant Reformation. From that time on, and for some unknown reason, this distemper of insincerity has shifted its hold from the clergy to the laity. For the last four centuries the Christian clergy, of all faiths and denominations, Catholic and Protestant alike, have shown on the whole a mounting index of sincerity,—honest, self-consecrated men. But as for the laity,—well, why is it? What can the reason be? The opening up of the New World, with its measureless worldly opportunities; the growth of science; the ma-

chine age; the chance to acquire great wealth; the factory system; the higher criticism of the Bible; the growth of democracy with its right of private judgment; perhaps the very multiplicity of creeds stimulated by the Reformation,—something has cankered the layman's love for his religion. Many have left the church and are quite indifferent to its existence. Many claim to be repelled by the spiritual and intellectual incompetence of their ministers. Of course millions are still in the churches, earnest, devoted, if somewhat bewildered Christian people and church-goers. But there are too many millions who are Christians only in the sense that they are not pagans; or because of family tradition; or they are Christian in theory; or because it is seemly; or for aesthetic reasons; or like time-tables marked with a § (Sundays only); or through shameless affectation. Is it too much to say that before the Reformation we have the picture of an insincere clergy preaching to an eager and enthusiastic laity; after the Reformation we have the picture of an earnest, devoted clergy preaching to an apathetic and insincere laity? "Post hoc, ergo propter hoc,"—perhaps; but at first sight here is a heavy indictment Protestantism has to face,—the decline of interest in their religion among the laity.

Even among those church-goers who are quite above the charge of indifference to religion we detect a spirit that vastly complicates the task of preaching; not exactly a critical spirit, although that element is present, but rather a wistful, hesitating reticence, which seems to say, I wish it were all indubitably true, but I cannot suppress my questions. I love it so, and crave it so, that I cannot keep away; yet now that I am here, I cannot give myself wholly to it. Something seems to hold me back. It is not always to be detected in such pathetically gentle forms; sometimes it is openly defiant. In either form it presents to the modern preacher one of his insidious difficulties. As a very intelligent, habitual church-goer once put it: "My minister says things which he knows I don't believe, and I know he doesn't believe. Yet I love to hear him say them." How is a man to deal with such a condition?

Perhaps the difficulty is largely a matter of definitions. Doubtless that which the minister means when he says "God" is present in the people's minds, as rich and valid and accepted as in his own. Yet when he says "God" they stiffen and wince. It is the same with "Faith," and "Soul," and "Immortality," and "Revela-

tion," and "Heaven," and "Hell." If a word, as Justice Holmes once said, is the skin of an idea, they have got into the way of putting the identical ideas into a different set of skins from those the minister uses. We seem to need first of all a new religious vocabulary that shall be acceptable to both and the same in meanings to both. Then with perfect understanding of each other the modern minister can begin with hope to regain some of his lost effectiveness. As it is now, these conditions have played havoc with sermons. Too many sermons are degenerates of a once noble tradition. They have grown puny in size: ten or twelve minutes instead of a good solid thirty. This indicates loss of spiritual vitality and self-confidence. The argument that people can listen attentively for only twenty minutes is nonsense. The same people, on Monday, will listen a full hour, eagerly, to a travelogue, or a lecture on current events, or on modern psychology, or on "How to Develop a Pleasing Personality."

Too many sermons show their degeneracy by frankly avoiding their sole proper field,—religion, theology, the things of the spirit,—and wandering off into such by-path meadows as politics, or book reviews, or Single Tax, or just unblushing entertainment, of a more or less high-brow quality. One devoted church member said only a few days ago, "Oh, I heard the Bishop preach such a wonderful sermon last Sunday. He kept the congregation in a titter the whole time."

Can the sermon come back? Perhaps never again to the wholly exaggerated effectiveness and importance it held in Colonial days. That would be too much to ask, too much even to desire. But in an age of movie actors, and news commentators, and radio speakers, and war correspondents, and columnists, each one of whom speaks to more people, more often, with more effectiveness, and with more formative influence on thought, standards, and character than any pulpit in the land can claim, (for America has put her soul into the keeping of a strange agglomeration of prophets), surely there is a place for the sermon, with its dignity, its gravity, and its concern with the deepest questions of life. How to secure that place, is the question. Here are a few humble suggestions, most diffidently offered:

1) The sermon should have its objective and stick to it. It should deal with those things of the spirit which are a greatest

common denominator running through all human hearts. It should insist on their reality and prime importance; and give guidance in their proper cultivation; and strive to secure for them their due weight and influence in determining the total reactions of the man. This is tantamount to saying that modern preaching can never hope to be effective unless it has a very definite and very urgent spiritual message. This is so obvious that it is difficult to put it into words; it sounds banal. Yet think how many ministers today are presuming to preach who have precious little to say, and hardly dare to say that little. Modern preachers should go back to their prototype, the Old Testament prophet, who kept his mouth shut until his message had accumulated a pressure which his spirit could no longer confine, and then appeared in the market-place quivering like a steam boiler about to burst. Modern preachers need a sense of Divine possession, a burden of the Lord laid upon them.

2) The sermon should be interesting. Dean Sperry once said that an uninteresting sermon commits the unpardonable sin. It must be able to capture and hold attention. Really good sermons can be deadly dull and often are; and so their value is completely lost. But no sermon need be dull, and how to avoid that quagmire is a very important question for the preacher's consideration.

There is a wrong way. As we know, the popular taste is forever leaning to one subject or another of general interest. Great successive epidemics of susceptibility to one concern after another sweep over humanity. The utterance, be it play, movie, novel, story, or sermon, that deals with the subject which happens to be in fashion at the moment, will at least start off on the right foot. This probably explains the willingness of our forefathers to listen to sermons which to us would be unendurably dull: they themselves were profoundly interested in the matters with which those terrible sermons dealt. And it may be that in following the intricate, closely-knit dialectics of their systematic theology, they derived the same sort of pleasure we derive from reading a mystery story. At all events, theology was in fashion, and so they cheerfully endured their dry-as-dust theological sermons. Now it is quite possible for the astute preacher to keep his finger on the pulse of popular taste, ascertain the subject that is in fashion, and attune his preaching accordingly. And why not? That is precisely

what the syndics of the theatre, the movies, the magazines, the lecture-bureau, and all the other self-appointed purveyors of our modern culture, are doing. If you don't believe it, try writing a story that does not fall into their pattern, and see for yourself how promptly it comes back to you. For the minister to do this is to forfeit all claim to authenticity as a prophet, and to debase his calling to the moral level of the tabloid newspaper whose motto is, "Give the people what they want." The minister faces a responsibility as well as an opportunity; and unless the astuteness that sees his opportunity is governed by a self-consecration that makes him tremble before his responsibility, he has no place in the ministry. He must make his sermons interesting, but in some other way.

He may assume that his subject matter holds a constant place if not the most prominent place in the interest of all thoughtful people, of all people to whom it is worth his while to preach at all. From this as a starting point, he can make his sermon interesting in several ways, chiefly by being interested in it himself. Earnestness is contagious. He can make his sermons "listenable" by taking care that they are orderly, clear, easily followed, logically and intellectually dignified, consequential,—so that each point follows inevitably from its predecessor, and there is an unbroken onward flow of thought to a definite and worthy conclusion. A few, precise, and instantly luminous illustrations are the greatest help in the world. They must fit exactly, and they must be short. Similes, metaphors, touch-and-go allusions, hit-and-run parallels will not only light up the thought of the sermon, but will hold attention. Such flashes of luminosity are often found in Phillips Brooks' sermons: "The man who tries to be moral without religious faith is like a sun-dial in the wood shed." (Quoted from a treacherous memory.)

The style and bearing are very important; they can make him repellent, or winsome and ingratiating. He would do well to avoid the pompous pulpit manner, and the *ex cathedra* sententiousness. He may intone the service, if he must; but never the sermon. He should remember the proprieties of the place and hour, but never be over-powered by them. He should use the language of Hazlitt's "Gentleman in the Parlour," but with the freedom of a gentleman. So long as he avoids slang and other breaches of good taste, his

address may be direct, personal, colloquial, idiomatic, picturesque, with touches of humor, pathos, irony, or passion; above all, easy and natural, such an address as he would employ when conversing with a company of cultivated ladies and gentlemen in somebody's living room.

3) The sermon should be fair; fair-minded; fair in judgment, comment and appraisal. The besetting sin of the pulpiteer, especially of this age, and the chief cause of his loss of prestige with intelligent men, is his habit of "seeing red" on insufficient provocation; going off at half cock; hurling his thunder-bolts before he has considered both sides of the matter. This habit is a sorry self-betrayal. It indicates a readiness to believe the worst, which is anything but Christian. Charles A. Bennett describes the irreligious man as one whose "world is terrifyingly hard and bright, with no saving mistiness of outline. There is no twilight in it." Also, it indicates a temperamental violence, a savage delight in just hurling thunderbolts. Also, it shows that he would rather pound his pulpit than ascertain the facts. As Amos might say, He sells justice for a dramatic climax, and the truth for a resounding period.

Righteous indignation has its place, but unless it is supported by a complete knowledge of all the facts, it fizzles out into contemptible futility. We would much better let God hurl the thunderbolts. "Judge not, that ye be not judged," said one who had a better prophetic right to speak for God than most of us. Moreover, there is a haunting rebuke in Marc Connelly's "Green Pastures," where "de Lord" says, "Gabe, put de thunder-bolts back in de box. I'se tired o' throwing dem."

One seldom hears an outburst of righteous indignation without questioning its righteousness. Be fair. Give the Devil his due; and if uncertain of the exact amount, better give him more than his due than less. Always apply one acid test: "In his place, would I have done any differently?" Every human situation is a baffling mixture of moral values, good, bad, and indifferent; unmixed evil is as rare as unmixed good. Unless the preacher in his capacity as prophet, one who speaks for God, can be certain that his judgments are those that God would make, he would do better to restrain his denunciations and treat the matter in another way. Christ's way was to emphasize the attractiveness of the good:

Blessed are the peace-makers, was more to his liking than Cursed are the war-makers.

The upshot of it is that preaching would inspire more confidence, win a readier response, and prove far more effective if ministers cultivated more of the grace of diffidence in their judgments. It is all well enough for conscience to speak its condemnations, but conscience must first be sure of the facts. A conscience cocked at hair trigger towards the other fellow, and at safety towards the self, is worse than none at all.

4) At the same time, preaching must be fearless. And if this seems to contradict what has just been said, suppose we put it another way: preaching must fear nothing except the Reality whose mouth-piece the preacher professes to be. At first sight, fearlessness is hardly a virtue in our Liberal Churches, where every condition invites the preacher to be fearless. Our pulpits are really free. Our people are theologically open-minded, or at least thick-skinned. Creeds are unknown. The only exactions made are those of good taste which, it is to be hoped, the minister will be the first to recognize. Why should we not be fearless, when there is nothing to fear?

This is only a surface appearance. There are situations even among us when it is as hard for us to be fearless as for any old-time Presbyterian. Occasionally our preaching invades the touchy realms of politics, or sociology, or economics, or high finance. At once we realize that we are on thin ice. There are plenty of ministers who will fearlessly say what they believe about the Virgin Birth, or the inerrancy of the Bible, but will hesitate to admit that they voted for President Roosevelt, or that they are conscientious objectors at heart, or what they really think of big business. "Where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also." True, theology is no longer a treasure with our people; its place has been taken by other commodities. But their hearts have followed that new treasure, and are just as sensitive as ever. Touch them where their hearts are, and even our Liberal people will begin to gather faggots for an auto-da-fé.

There is no rule for the avoidance of this hazard. Cowards will keep off the thin ice, but we are talking about the fearless preacher. We may say what we will about keeping our preaching to the things of the spirit; sometimes the spirit has to be identified

in just such practical situations, allusion to which cannot be avoided. It is a hazard others have taken; now it is our turn. To seek it is a mistake, for, just as the true hero is the man who is scared to death, so the genuine martyr is the man who dreads it with all his might and takes every honorable precaution to escape it. Then when it comes let him remember

*The picket frozen on duty,
The mother starved for her brood,
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
Jesus on the rood,*

and plenty of others, from Luther before the Diet, to Go-to-Hell Whittlesey: illustres, invicti, God's commandos; not a bad company to belong to. In no respect does preaching reach such permanence as in its fearlessness. The minister who retains his self-repect through all the contemptible methods of modern persecution, whose only effect is to disgrace the persecutor, may starve in his garret, but he will be remembered with respect and pride for years after he has gone.

5) Finally, preaching must be calculated to win conviction; real conviction; not merely a change in superficial policies and styles of behaviour, and not merely a shift from one hypothetical experiment in living to another. Such changes are only changes in the technique of living, and can be made without altering the essential quality of the soul. Uriah Heap may vary his policy of behaviour from open and surly churlishness to fawning and obsequious humility, and still remain Uriah Heap, the vicious beast of prey. No matter what his disguise, Ithuriel can touch him with his spear and reveal the same loathesome creature. Not until the controlling axioms of his being are changed, so that Ithuriel's spear touching him again reveals a different kind of creature, has he been affected in his convictions. Preaching must be calculated to win that kind of conviction; something closely akin to conversion; in fact another name for conversion. That is the most important and the hardest task before the preacher.

There is a parallel between preaching and warfare. Both strive to win conviction. Sometimes warfare succeeds. When two dogs fight there is an immediacy of bodily contact in their strife which carries authority. One fight is enough. Thereafter one of the

two is a convinced dog. It is the same when two urchins fight it out in a vacant lot. Once is enough. Thereafter one of the two is a convinced boy. The moment mechanical accessories are introduced into warfare, such as armor, weapons, guns, battleships, tanks, planes, and submarines, that personal immediacy of conflict which carries authority is destroyed, and all hope of winning conviction vanishes. There may be a defeated side, but never a convinced side. Proud human nature, jealous of its status, begins to say, "Man for man, we are as brave as they and as good fighters. If we had had as many weapons we would have made our cause to triumph. Therefore, our cause is as right as theirs. We shall not be caught napping again. Just wait till next time." This means that as a method for the annihilation of one side or the other mechanized warfare is a glorious success. As a method of convincing one side or the other mechanized warfare has reduced itself to an absurdity. It has completely stultified itself.

Incidentally, this also means that for the genuine convictions which we failed to win during long periods of peace we are now striving to substitute the pseudo-convictions of military victory. They will not last long. Because of its mechanical accessories modern warfare must result either in an appalling sequence of "next times," or in the total annihilation of one of the two belligerents. This is simply a dispassionate statement of fact. There is nothing to read between the lines. It is not a veiled argument for Pacifism. We are all pacifists, but we realize that Pacifism is not an ideal for the individual, it is an ideal for the super-organism, for the State, for the Whole of Humanity. All the individual can do is to work for pacifism; he has no more right to practice pacifism in his individual capacity than he has to declare war in his individual capacity.

Now to carry this argument over to the matter of preaching, we find that if preaching can represent a direct, first-hand conflict of personality with personality, mind with mind, soul with soul, there is some hope of one side carrying conviction to the other. But the more our modern preaching depends upon technical or material accessories, architecture, music, stained glass, vestments, ritual, or on such things as literary skill, the musical voice, the commanding presence, the longer is the moment of conviction deferred. Proud human nature, jealous of its own countenance, finds plenty of

excuse for refusing to be convinced. The hearer thinks to himself, "If I could speak in such a place, with such support, with such a voice, with such dialectical skill and dramatic point, I could give my convictions as great a carrying power as his. Therefore I will stick to my convictions; point for point they are just as good as his." This is why the most magnificent preaching is so often nothing but magnificently futile.

Please do not misunderstand. This is no disparagement of the accessories of church worship. They have their place. The point is, there must be something about preaching which is able to override all these accessories and establish an unmediated contact with the souls of the hearers. That something may be what Emerson meant by his "sad sincerity"; an earnestness and an honesty which no accessory can disguise, but which puts the two parties into personal rapport, and gives the sermon that immediacy of impact between the naked soul of the preacher and the naked soul of the hearer which can alone carry authority. Then there is some chance of winning conviction and making the sermon effective. Not even the Lord Jehovah can convince Jacob by mere command or intimidation. Jacob must wrestle with the angel until the breaking of the day, in a direct, gasping, breast-to-breast struggle before conviction can come. And of all the phrases in the religious jargon of our forefathers there is none more accurate than to "wrestle in prayer" with an obdurate sinner.

Dr. George A. Gordon used to say that his forty-three years of preaching in the Old South Church had been nothing but forty-three years of thinking out loud. That comes near to the root of the matter. For preaching to be effective must be a most intimate traffic between the very penetralia of preacher and hearers. When the minister can lead his people to his own Peniel and make them say, "I have seen God face to face," then he has touched the height of his effectiveness.

Religion in Higher Education

JAY WILLIAM HUDSON

It has gradually become a conviction of many educators (a conviction which I share) that courses in religion should be made a significant part of the program of our undergraduate colleges of liberal culture.

First of all, and through all, I want to stress what I think is the true motive for teachers of religion, with this particular objective, if they are to win the deserved respect of the teachers of other subjects in our colleges and universities. Primarily, this motive is not that of inducing students to become religious: but that of informing them of what religion has been and is, together with its place, past and present, in the larger culture for which liberal education exists.

Let me present a parallel. As a professor of philosophy, I teach a course in ethical theory. In this course it is not my aim to make my students good. Rather, it is my aim to acquaint them with the main problems of ethics, with all the typical solutions. I have no desire to pattern my class in ethical theory after that of a Sunday School or a revival meeting.

Indeed, I am persuaded that one of the chief reasons for the prejudice of some college teachers against religious education is that this true motive has not been made clear, either to the educator in religion himself, or to his academic colleagues.

The recognition of the need of education in religion involves an awareness of the fundamental relations of religion to every other aspect of cultural education. This raises the question: What is culture? Or, better, when is a person culturally educated? Well, I assume that a truly educated person is one who has learned and assimilated into his character the best that man has thought and done. If this is culture, it is self-evident that, in any truly cultural education, the religious aspect of civilization cannot be excluded, any more than can the economic aspect, or the political, or the sociological, or the biological. Indeed it is quite obvious that any college course in a cultural subject touches somewhere upon the phenomena of religion.

Let us see. What are the courses offered in any standard college of liberal culture? Broadly, they comprise the social sciences, the physical sciences, and the arts, including literature. Is it possible to deny that there is a real and significant relation between religious phenomena and every one of these fields of cultural education? Survey the social sciences. Can an historian ignore the tremendous importance of religious movements and events? Surely the sociologist has to recognize religious trends as major factors in the analysis of many social situations and drifts. The political scientist is compelled to devote considerable attention to the relation between the religious institution and the theories and fortunes of the State. The doctrine of the divine right of kings is just one instance. Even the economist, if his theories are adequate, is forced to relate his economic values to the values the religious institution has set upon men and things. Psychology is not complete without a psychology of the religious consciousness, so far as psychology deals with conscious states at all. At least, William James and a number of other major psychologists have so thought. And philosophy? It touches religion on many sides: the problems of God, Freedom, Immortality, the ultimate nature of man and the universe, ethics.

What about the physical sciences? Does the theory of evolution have any religious significance? Both prominent biologists and religious thinkers have thought so. How about miracles? How shall we conciliate them, if at all, with science's assumptions of the uniformity of nature and the law of universal causation?

Consider the arts. Can one teach the history of architecture without acknowledging that some of its greatest creations are found in the edifices of religion, from long before the Parthenon to now? Can sculpture leave out the splendid classics molded into form by the religious spirit? Paintings. Subtract from them Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* and the host of the rest inspired by religious events and aspirations: what, then, is left of some of the greatest masters in certain conspicuous eras? Music. Omit all the religious music, and you have omitted some of the most sublime expressions of the human soul. Literature. Scan the works of many of the great poets, novelists, dramatists. They cannot leave out religion or the vast literature of religion. Many of the most significant allusions of the master-writers are lost without a knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures.

And now I proceed, as a logician, to the inevitable conclusion of my theme. Since religious phenomena are recognized factors in all civilization, it is imperative for a man's complete culture that he understand them as well as he understands the other fundamentally cultural subjects. Clearly, this means that the study of religious phenomena should be put on an academic parity with all other cultural subjects, either by (1) incorporating courses in religion in various of the traditional college departments as already established; or, by (2) instituting separate departments of religion in the college; or, by (3) affiliating the college with schools of religion outside of the college or university organization.

However the educational machinery may differ, the courses most favored for credit in American colleges are those in the philosophy of religion, the psychology of religion, the Bible as literature, comparative religion, and the relation of religion to ethics.

I am fairly convinced that, within the next generation or so, courses in religion, taught with the purely cultural motive, will take an increasingly important place as an essential part of higher education. I believe this partly because I believe that teachers of religion will be increasingly recruited from reputable institutions of higher learning, with an expertness in their field comparable to that of the other specialists in human culture, many of whom, so far, have tended to look with suspicion upon religion as a really significant part of our educational objectives. Considering the matter from a purely academic standpoint, educators will eventually realize the plain fact that man is what he is today, both in his individual and social life, largely because of the religious beliefs, motives, and ideals which have helped to mold him throughout his entire history. Whether some of these beliefs were false, some of these motives bad, and some of these ideals mistaken is not pertinent here. What is pertinent here is that the college cannot omit the study of religion if it is adequately to achieve the broader purposes of its culture.

The Changing Reputation of Human Nature

Part II

JAMES LUTHER ADAMS

The major criticisms of Liberalism can be subsumed under the general objection suggested by Dean Fenn in the article referred to, that the world, man, and God are envisaged by "Modern Liberalism" as too neatly harmonized in a purely logical concept of unity.²⁴ In order to understand this criticism as it affects the Liberal doctrine of man, it will be instructive first to observe the application of it to the theory of nature characteristic of the old "harmonistic" rationalism and then to proceed to an application of it to the reputation of human nature.

From the point of view of the modern voluntarist, the seventeenth and eighteenth-century view of nature as a beautifully working mechanism or as a manifestation of reason was subjective,—it did not sufficiently take into account the stubborn external reality. The voluntarist, agreeing with the empiricist, holds that although nature lends itself to rational methods of inquiry, existence as *fact* comes first and man's rational interpretation only later. The conditions under which existence is maintained or modified are "given." The world might have been any one of an infinite number of possible worlds, but actually it is the kind of world it is. This actual existence is a primary datum. Or, as the British empiricist F. R. Tennant says, it is an alogical datum. It is not legislated by reason or by necessary being.²⁵ Indeed, man's

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 517. "Modern Liberalism will have to revise its favorite concept of unity. At present, monistic idealism is very much under the weather philosophically, and a theological system akin to it must suffer correspondingly."

²⁵ A recent writer on Whitehead expresses this idea as follows: "When we say, 'This is a bit of concrete reality,' what do we mean? We mean more than a mere assertion that 'this exists now.' According to Whitehead, we mean that 'this' is just what it is *in contrast* to what it might possibly have been. That is what 'becoming real' means—just *this* has happened, just *this* that *might* have been something else. At this point it might be objected that the occurrence of any event is determined by causal laws, and that therefore whatever happens could not in fact have been anything else. But this, if granted, merely pushes the inquiry a step farther back. We may explain the occurrence of event *X* by a causal law perhaps, but

reason itself has roots in a being and in a history that might have been different. Nor is the alogical datum of existence identical with an idea that is "clear and distinct." Actuality is richer than thought. There is always a tension between *logos* and being. Hence, "natural laws" must be viewed as only tentative generalizations formulated on the basis of certain observed data.²⁶

But the older Liberalism was not only subjective in its view of nature. It also interpreted nature in terms of form rather than of vitality, in terms of reason rather than of "the divine fecundity of nature." Moreover, structural centripetal forces rather than individual centrifugal tensions were stressed. In so far as a man bases his religious convictions upon this "rational" conception of nature he tends to develop an over-harmonious view of it, and thus also to develop a "simple" belief in the immanence of God. For this reason, I take it, Dean Fenn recommends to those who adopt a monistic view that they "seriously consider what sort of God it is that nature reveals." As he says, "we cannot be so enamoured of the loveliness of nature as to be blind to its terrible aspects." The heavens may declare the glory of God, and nature may exhibit the operation of a principle of mutual aid, yet the struggle for existence in nature amply justifies Tennyson's description of it as "red in tooth and claw." No doubt it was because of this internecine struggle in nature that St. Paul as well as the ancient Hebrews looked upon even the world of nature as a fallen world, a world to be restored to love by the New Age or by the atonement of Christ. At all events, nature exhibits both creative and destructive tendencies, both a "will to harmony" and a "will to power." Neither of these tendencies appears without the other. Moreover, the power to exist and the power of love (or mutuality) do not possess perfect correlation; disharmony as well as harmony, devo-

is not the causal law itself real? For the real particularity of the causal law itself exists only in contrast to what it might have been but which in fact it is not." Stephen Lee Ely, *The Religious Availability of Whitehead's God* (Madison, 1942), p. 9.

Especially valuable is the treatment of the relation between fact and idea to be found in F. E. England, *The Validity of Religious Experience* (London, 1937). Dr. England relies heavily upon Whitehead. See also F. R. Tennant, *Philosophy of the Sciences* (Cambridge, 1932), Lecture III.

²⁶Sir William Bragg has said that the modern physicist must use one set of conceptions on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and a different set on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

lution as well as evolution are to be found in nature.

* * *

Analogous objections may be directed against the older Liberalism's view of the human level of existence,—history. Here again the rationalistic conception is criticized because it is subjective and also because it overlooks the element of vitality or creativity as it appears on the level of human freedom: That is, it ignores the alogical character of history and it rationalistically formalizes history by interpreting it as a progressive movement towards harmony. Thus it fails to take fully into account the elements of conflict and perversion; it fails to recognize that vitality in history does not issue from logic (which is a regulative and not a constitutive principle); and it fails to recognize that this vitality brings forth both harmony and disharmony, both creation and destruction.

The great liberal Ernst Troeltsch, who anticipated much of contemporary voluntarism, has decisively set forth these criticisms in his famous work, *Historismus und seine Probleme*. History, Troeltsch says, is something "given," and the forces that operate there share the alogical character inherent in existence itself. This alogical character of history is manifest both in necessity and in freedom. Neither the necessity nor the freedom can be understood merely in terms of reason with its self-evident premises. In the first place, knowledge of the character of that necessity can be acquired only by observing it inductively and not by deduction from *a priori* principles. In the second place, the very fact of human freedom gives to history a singularity peculiar to all human creations. "In history," as Troeltsch says, "a qualitative unity and originality is assumed to be originally given . . . which may be called fate, destiny, creation, or something else." He speaks of this aspect of history as metalogical and not logical. For whereas organic nature is practically enclosed within the biological circle of birth, growth, procreation, and death, history does not repeat itself,—it generates novelty. And because of this also, it cannot be interpreted in strictly rationalistic terms. As Bergson and Whitehead (as well as Troeltsch) have pointed out, strict rationalism precludes the possibility of novelty.²⁷

Now, there are certain implications for the nature of man which

²⁷On this whole problem, see Troeltsch's brief but profound article, "Contingency," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, Vol. 4, (1921), 87-89.

must be seen to follow from the fact that history is the realm of both necessity and freedom. Man is fated as well as free. As Wilhelm von Humboldt puts it, "man always ties on with what lies at hand" (*Der Mensch knüpft immer an Vorhandenes an*). Certain fateful conditioning factors always operate in the individual as well as in society. Man must act in terms of the historical process and of his psycho-physical organism. His actions must be of a certain kind in order to be relevant and also in order that he may avoid destruction. He cannot act merely in accordance with logical canons of an *a priori* order. Even his ethical ideals emerge through his experience of being and of history. In this sense, it may be said that "being is older than value." Yet, despite these conditioning factors, man is fated also to be free; he is compelled to make decisions. For he can transcend his situation and in some measure he can freely change it; he can even change himself. As a creative entity he can act to preserve or increase, destroy or pervert, mutuality,—though it must be remembered also that conditions over which he has little control may affect the results of his action. Thus man lives both in and above history. He is fatefully caught in history, both as an individual and as a member of a group,²⁸ and he is also able to be creative in history.

Through the use of this creative freedom man expresses the highest form of vitality that existence permits. Indeed, since this creativity is a manifestation of a divinely given and a divinely renewing power, we say that man is created in the image of God, that is, he participates in the divine creativity. This and not reason alone is the basis for the liberal's faith in man, and no change in the reputation of human nature could involve a denial of this fact without also repudiating the very essence of the liberal doctrine of man.

Because of this freedom, human history not only exhibits a singularity that transcends all *a priori* conceptions of the intellect; it also provides a more complex and spiritual form of conflict than that to be found on the level of nature. For history is a

²⁸It should be said in passing that Professor Frank H. Knight has pointed out that economic Liberalism erred "in taking the individual's actual endowment with means as a datum," that is, "in taking the individual too much for granted" as such. Cf. his article "Religion and Ethics in Modern Civilization," *THE JOURNAL OF LIBERAL RELIGION*, III (Summer, 1941), 16.

theatre of conflicts in which the tensions between the will to mutuality and the will to power appear in their most subtle and perverse forms.²⁹ In short, history is tragic. Let it be said immediately that this does not mean merely that men violate the moral code or disobey the law. That they do these things is obvious and universally recognized. The changing reputation of human nature does not depend upon any such "discovery."

It is at this point that we come to the consideration of the major deficiencies in the older Liberal doctrines of man and progress. These deficiencies can be brought into bold relief by showing concretely what is meant by the assertion that history is tragic. We shall use the Liberal epoch as an illustration of this view of history, not because that epoch is different from other epochs as a revelation of the nature of history, but rather because the tragic outcome of Liberalism in the present crisis presents the major problem confronting contemporary society and also because Liberalism provides certain of the principles that are of decisive positive significance for the continued development of a democratic society and of liberal religion. In dealing with these problems we shall have to go over some very familiar ground. But it would seem worthwhile to do this, not only in order to show how the monistic, Liberal doctrines of man and progress actually contributed to the tragic outcome of the Liberal epoch but also in order later to indicate how a voluntaristic interpretation of man and history purports to correct the deficiencies of the "harmonistic" conception.

When we say that history is tragic, we mean that the perversions and failures in history are associated precisely with the highest creative powers of man and thus with his greatest achievements.

²⁹On these two qualities of will, see the writings of Jacob Boehme, or see H. Brinton, *The Mystic Will* (New York, 1930), a study of Boehme's philosophy. Cf. also Irving Babbitt's distinction between *élan vital* and *frein vital*, *Democracy and Leadership* (Boston, 1924), pp. 17 ff., and Appendix B, "Theories of the Will."

A third type of will is also to be seen occasionally, namely the sort that tries to *escape* conflict by devotion to love without power. It was against this sort of weak will to love that Nietzsche inveighed in his criticism of Christianity. Cf. G. B. Foster, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Curtis W. Reese (New York, 1931), chap. 12. See also Erich Fromm, *op. cit.*, and G. A. Morgan, *What Nietzsche Means* (Cambridge, 1941).

One may describe the extreme positions here by saying that the absolute pacifist seemingly believes in love without power; Hitler believes in power without love.

One might call this the Oedipus motif in the sphere of history: nemesis is very often encountered almost simultaneously with the seemingly highest achievement. The very means and evidences of progress turn out again and again to be also the instruments of perversion or destruction. The national culture, for example, is the soil from which issue cherished treasures of a people, their language, their poetry, their music, their common social heritage. Yet nationalism is also one of the most destructive forces in the whole of human history. Progress in transportation has assisted tremendously in the raising of the standard of living: yet it has produced also a mobility in our cultural life which has brought in its train a new rootlessness and instability. Improved means of printing have made the treasures of the printed page available even to those who run as they read. But it has also made possible the appearance of the irresponsible manipulators of the idea industries, with the consequence that literacy is now also a powerful instrument for demagogery and the corruption of taste. The growth of a machine civilization has made available to the peasant objects that kings used to pine for; yet the machine doth man unking, and it has necessitated so rapid an urbanization of the population that a sense of community has been destroyed for millions of people, and intimate, colorful family life has become largely a rural phenomenon.

Or, consider another aspect of progress. There is no such thing as a unilinear development in the area of *moral* achievement. We see this in the fact that each generation has to acquire wisdom over again, and within this process "the war of the generations" arises. The son of the Philistine becomes a Bohemian, and his son becomes a communist. The mystical Body of Christ becomes an autocratic ecclesiastical hierarchy, and this in turn gives place to a spiritual anarchy or a militant secularism. There is progress here, regress and a new attempt or perversion there; one year a Revolution for the rights of man, but four years later a Reign of Terror and then a Napoleonic era; an American Revolution then, Daughters of the American Revolution now; emancipation of the slaves then, poll-tax Senators now; the extension of suffrage then, the Kelly-Nash machine now. Certainly, if there is progress, it is no simple configuration of "upward trends." At times, it looks more like a thing of shreds and patches.

The general tendency of Liberalism has been to neglect this tragic factor of history. It is true that most of the theorists of Liberalism were definitely pessimistic concerning man's worthiness of being entrusted with concentrated political power, but the general and prevailing trend of their thinking was nevertheless lopsidedly optimistic.

It is true also that in the hey-day of the idea of progress a few men expressed skepticism concerning the progress "assured by the trend of natural forces,"²⁹ but they were given little heed. A poet here and there, an orthodox Calvinist or a cranky social prophet spoke out, but the idea that some men when released from bondage to superstition or to political and ecclesiastical authority, might use their newly acquired freedom and reason to build a new Bastille does not seem to have occurred to many. In America, Theodore Parker saw the handwriting on the wall. But his skepticism concerning the goodness of the new men of power has not had a perceptibly large influence among us. For as the nineteenth century "progressed," the wonders of science, the spread of education, the extension of suffrage, the success of certain types of reform legislation, the sense of emancipation from traditional restraints and ideas, the expansion of markets, the increase of production, population, and prosperity—all of these things conspired to make men think too well of themselves. Even Marxism, despite its attack upon the evils of bourgeois society, its great stress upon the class struggle and its criticism of the theory of unilinear progress, kept the faith in perfectibility by proclaiming a belief in dialectical progress towards a Utopian classless society.³⁰ One might suppose that the Civil War would have disturbed the American's com-

²⁹ For example, Huxley, a scientist and not a "harmonizer," said in 1892: "The doctrines of predestination, of original sin, of the innate depravity of man and the evil fate of the greater part of the race, of the primacy of Satan in this world, of the essential vileness of matter, of a malevolent Demiurgus subordinate to a benevolent Almighty, who has only lately revealed himself, faulty as they are, appear to me to be vastly nearer the truth than the 'liberal' popular illusions that babies are all born good, and that the example of a corrupt society is responsible for their failure to remain so; that it is given to everybody to reach the ethical ideal if he will only try . . . that everything will come right (according to our notions) at last." (Quoted by Dean Sperry, *op. cit.*, p. 184.)

³⁰ In "orthodox" Marxism "reliance upon 'processes at work in the order of things' became translated into the mythical language of the 'inevitability' of the development of capitalism into socialism." Sidney Hook, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx* (New York, 1933), p. 26.

placency, but instead of being interpreted as an illustration of man's unwillingness to relinquish power for the sake of the pre-established harmony, it was taken mainly as evidence of the increasing emancipation of the race from bondage. And most of the colored folk, not to speak of millions of others, still remain slaves. Even after the publication of *The Origin of Species* the old optimism continued to prevail. What Carlyle contemptuously called "Darwin's Gorilla damnification of humanity" was exorcised by the grace of the older idea of progress. Thus the idea of evolution rather than the idea of struggle became the dominant if not the only "note" of the popular anthropology. In other words, the tragic note was softened and "harmonized."^{30*}

And meanwhile, what had been happening? The rising bourgeois class, with which Unitarianism had been largely associated along with other branches of Protestantism, was gaining control of nature and commerce. A new will to power, comparable in irresistibility to ancient feudalism, became the main line of "progress." The principles of freedom and liberation were more and more domesticated into the service of Big Business and manifest destiny. As Professor Hocking puts it, the *feeling* for democracy that characterized the early days of Liberalism was lost. A solicitude for the dogma of "rugged individualism" has served

^{30*} Carr (*op. cit.*, pp. 58 ff.) points out that "the survival of the belief in a harmony of interests was rendered possible by the unparalleled expansion of production, population and prosperity, which marked the hundred years following the publication of *The Wealth of Nations* and the invention of the steam engine. Expanding prosperity contributed to the popularity of the doctrine in three different ways. It attenuated competition for markets among producers, since fresh markets were constantly becoming available; it postponed the class issue, with its insistence on the primary importance of equitable distribution, by extending to members of the less prosperous classes some share in the general prosperity; and by creating a sense of confidence in present and future well-being, it encouraged men to believe that the world was ordered on so rational a plan as the natural harmony of interests. 'It was the continual widening of the field of demand which, for half a century, made capitalism operate as if it were a liberal utopia.'"

Thus we see that the extremely optimistic and non-tragic attitude as well as the moralism of the Anglo-Saxon mentality have been largely a product of historical conditions, that is, a concomitant of the "success" of the British and American empires. Perhaps it was this "success" that also inspired the "prophets" of the age to believe that "mankind had discovered that secret of perpetual motion called progress." Here also we see the reason one finds so little discussion of tragedy in the literature of religious liberalism or in that of England and America of the nineteenth century. R. H. Gabriel speaks of Melville as an exception in this respect. Cf. *The Course of American Democratic Thought* (New York, 1940), chap. 6.

only thinly to conceal the rigid desire to preserve economic gains. The dominant group has come to identify the interest of the community with its own interest, and any assailant of this group is told that he is working at cross purposes with his own interest as well as with the good of the community. As E. H. Carr points out in *The Twenty Years' Crisis* (p. 102) "the doctrine of the harmony of interests thus serves as an ingenious moral device invoked, in perfect sincerity, by privileged groups in order to justify and maintain their dominant position." In this way middle-class morality has become merely the product and the tool of power. The beginning of this shift in the temper of Liberalism can be traced back at least a hundred and fifty years in American history. Certainly, the old feeling for democracy had already very much subsided among the federalist Unitarians in the early days of the Republic. The commercial life of the nation was in time more and more looked upon as the supreme manifestation of its activity. In the words of Harold Laski:

The central theme of political policy thus became the supply of what commercial life required for its full expansion; and to this all effort in the community was increasingly subordinate. The religious discipline to which the individual had been formerly subject could then be replaced by an ethic derived predominantly from economic circumstance. [And it should be added, humanitarian movements made no essential change in this ethos.] Laisser-faire as a program was the logical counterpart in social philosophy of Protestantism in the religious, of free inquiry in the intellectual, sphere. Each came as a herald of freedom to an age hampered by obsolete principle. Each definitely enlarged by its victory the area in which the human spirit was free to voyage in self-discovery. But each in its adventure was to find that the abolition of unnecessary social restraint was not identical with the creation of necessary social control.³¹

In other words, the latest phase of the bourgeois epoch simply

³¹"The Rise of Liberalism," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York, 1930), Vol. I, 124. Mr. Laski gives the impression in this essay that economic Liberalism has no merits except as an ethic of aggrandizement. On the enduring values implicit in the philosophy of Liberalism, see Frank H. Knight, *The Ethics of Competition*, (New York, 1936). If we do not recognize the genuine accomplishments and the enduring principles of Liberalism, we not only fail to appreciate its tragedy, we also prepare the way for still greater destruction. Quincy Wright has criticized E. H. Carr on these grounds. He asserts that Carr underestimates the accomplishments of nineteenth-century Liberalism and also that in his statement of the economic principles which should govern post-war reorganization he "weights his argument in favor of totalitarian economics." See Wright's discussion of Carr's *Conditions of Peace*, "The War and the Peace," *Ethics*, LIII (1942), 64-68.

presents in a new form the problem that the earlier dynamic Liberalism set out to solve. The difference is that whereas formerly the demand for the free play of economic forces was made in the name of liberation from older social and political obstructions, today the same demand is made against those who would liberate men from the new bondage. (And it must be added that in the face of this perversion of liberty some contemporary pseudo-liberalists point the way out of the new bondage by offering a Utopian society that would destroy every vestige of liberalism and bring a still greater bondage.)

Thus while many of the "emancipated" have been paying lip-service to the ideals of an autonomous society, the actual social process has been moving in the direction of a new heteronomous society, dominated on the one side by heavily concentrated wealth (which is protected by the unblushing selfishness of bourgeois ideals and practices) and threatened on the other side by the irrationalism of the masses who have been shut out of democratic participation by the moralism and "rationalism" of the "elect." The average middle-class citizen and his wife (and his priest) now slumber in almost immovable complacency, and many who have been awakened by harbingers of doom have thrown in their lot with those who accept the gospel according to the National Association of Manufacturers. Hence, so far from providing a machinery whereby autonomous man through the exercise of his freedom and reason might enter into the shared life, Liberal society (partly, to be sure, by its failure to cope with new and old forms of illiberalism) has given rise to a congeries of power groups that have been so deeply caught in a conflict of interests and "freedoms" that the whole fine flourish has at last shown its teeth by ushering in two World Wars. Society is thus divided against itself, and it is caught in a titanic struggle of wills which is now operating on a planetary scale. History has bequeathed us not a pre-established harmony or a natural trend towards progress but rather a fateful conflict from which none can escape,— and no one knows to what ruinous lengths the conflict will go before the savage violence can be stopped. Hence there is full justification for Troeltsch's statement that the older Liberalism was "all too credulous of harmony and all too egocentric."⁸²

⁸²Ernst Troeltsch, *Christian Thought: Its History and Application*

And there we have the tragedy of modern history. "The freedoms of the past . . . have somehow brought forth the slaveries of the present,"³³ and with them a widespread cynicism and even a doubt concerning the value of life itself.

Is it any wonder that the reputation of human nature has been changing? Is it any wonder that the old world-view of Liberalism is today under attack on all sides? Dean Fenn's observation that Modern Liberalism is "too jocund for life as it actually is" now seems to be sardonic understatement. Thus more and more liberals are coming to agree with his statement that "Modern Liberalism . . . must deal more justly with the crushing tragedies of life, with evil and sin, if it is to command the respect of candid and thoughtful men." Undoubtedly it is for this reason that the subdominant motifs of the past two centuries as well as the motifs of the Bible and of Greek "tragic" philosophy have in recent decades gained in power and pertinence.³⁴ The "tragic sense of life" has been reawakened with a start. It may be too much to expect the modern secularized liberal to recognize the possible relevance of the biblical world-view "in our day and age." Yet, perhaps those who harbor a "cultured" antipathy or a "philosophical"

(London, 1923), p. 203.

For very recent indictments of Liberal culture, see E. H. Carr, *op. cit.*, and Max Horkheimer, "The End of Reason," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, IX (1942), 366-388.

³³Harris Harbison, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

³⁴Here it must be noted that the influential trends in this direction have for a long time been coming from the anthropologists, the sociologists and the psychologists as well as from the theologians. Certainly, the religious liberal should be cautioned against accepting the oft-repeated assertion that the attack on Liberalism is the outgrowth of post-war pessimism (Dean Fenn's criticism, remember, was written in 1913) and first emerged with the dialectical theologians, Barth and Brunner. In so far as these two thinkers have had an influence on the changing reputation of human nature, it has been a belated influence. They are themselves continuators of an earlier revolt against the tenets of the old Liberalism, a revolt that appeared first in the areas of secular philosophy, psychology, and economic theory. The uniqueness of Barth's protest resides as much in its extremism as in its novelty. Cf. Paul Tillich, "What Is Wrong with the 'Dialectic' Theology?" *The Journal of Religion*, XV (1935), 127-145; also, his long and critical review of Brunner's *The Mediator*, in *The Christian Century*, LI (Dec. 5, 1934), 1554-1556. It must be noted, however, that in the field of theology, Kierkegaard in his attack on Hegel one hundred years ago sowed some of the seeds that are now bearing fruit in theological gardens. But Kierkegaard was accorded little attention until after Marx and Nietzsche had planted and watered their quite different but scarcely less valuable seeds.

hauteur toward the Bible will before long be willing to heed the admonition, "Leave your Bible closed then, and open you Sophocles."

* * *

The same sort of analysis, and with similar results, must be applied to the individual psyche. The modern psychologist, like the sociologist, has gradually moved away from the presuppositions of the older Liberalism. Reason is now seen to be conditioned by history, its conclusions depending upon the premise that the reasoner starts with and thus largely upon the individual's primary interest, (or upon the interest of the group to which he belongs), whether that be social or anti-social. Hence, the conflict between love and power exists not only in the world at large. The "war within the cave" is found in the heart of Everyman, for the inner and the outer struggles mirror each other in what Malcolm Cowley has called a psycho-social parallelism. The picture of man as a purely logical machine, who first thinks of some desirable end and then calculates the means by which that end can be attained, has given way to the infinitely more complex social concept of man as a creature of impulse and passion and emotional preference, who only through a strenuous social discipline can transcend his incompatible desires and direct them toward some intelligent end. Indeed, reason is now seen to occupy the ambiguous position of being at the same time the umpire among unruly conflicting impulses and the producer of ideologies, that is, the rationalizing instrument whereby selfish interest is given a plausible but false justification. Basic predispositions, deep-seated conflicts between men and groups, and the tensions of the historical situation again and again draw the reason down from its unsteady pedestal. Consequently, many of our "ideas are weapons" and are conceived in the sin of mere self-interest, with an accompanying perversion of mind and abuse of liberty. This destruction of the older belief in the immaculate conception of ideas is for the liberal a far more significant turn than the destruction of belief in the immaculate conception of Jesus. We need not go all the way with cynics like Thurman Arnold and contend that the older Liberal conception of Man Thinking is a myth, or with Karl Marx and say unequivocally that existence determines consciousness rather than consciousness existence, (though we should

at least recognize the great contribution that Marx has made especially in his conception of ideology, a conception that is, by the way, found also in Martin Luther's writings). Nor need we go all the way with the Freudian interpretation of the origin and function of human reason. But we must recognize that the new social psychology has uncovered sources of vitality as well as a deep, dark area of conflict and even a fatefulness in the life of the psyche which the earlier rationalistic psychology perforce neglected.³⁵

Again we see that, although man possesses a divinely-given dignity in his freedom and creativity, he is also a creature of contradictions. He shares in the autonomy of the underlying creative will. But this means that he possesses a certain independence of God and his fellows; he can assert his own ego in a way that violates the divinely given conditions of meaningful existence. Through the abuse of freedom he becomes bound to tendencies in history which narrow the range of his freedom and which also pervert its operation so that he gives his energy and devotion more to power than to love. Thus the "gift" and ideal of freedom, "freedom with," degenerates into "freedom from." In this way man, reasoning but unreasonable, inflates his freedom into the self-enclosed egoism of undisturbed security.³⁶

Now, what should be noticed here is that this contradiction in human nature derives from the fact that man's will is a decisive element in his structure. And it is a will that is ambiguous in character. He can use his freedom by expressing a will to mutuality, but he can also abuse it by exercising a will to power. Freedom is therefore both the basis of meaning and the occasion for the destruction of meaning. Here we see again the tragic nature of the human condition. The tragedy does not derive merely from the fact that man carries within him an inheritance from the jungle. It derives also (and primarily) from the fact that he has

³⁵It is well to note in passing that in order to describe the conflicts of the human psyche, Freud has drawn upon the conceptions of "tragic" Greek mythology. Hence we might add to the previous admonition this one: "When you have finished your Sophocles, turn to your Jung and your Freud."

³⁶See on this topic the brilliant combination of theological commentary and literary criticism in Nicholas Berdyaev's *Dostoievsky* (New York, 1934).

a freedom that he did not have in the jungle,³⁷ a freedom to exercise the infinitely higher powers of human nature in terms of creative love, and a freedom to waste them in mere lassitude and triviality, or to pervert them for the sake of a will to power.

It is this co-existence in man of the possibility of using his freedom *ad majorem gloriam dei* and the possibility of perverting it to his own destructive ends which constitutes the deepest contradiction of his nature. And this contradiction is no merely human, subjective phenomenon. As Martin Luther suggests, man is the *Schauplatz* of opposing cosmic forces, the forces of love and of power. The contradiction penetrates his inmost spiritual life. It goes to the very center of his being; and it reaches out through the individual and permeates all his social relations. It is not, as the Marxists contend, merely a precipitate of the structure of society.

* * *

It was in connection with the sort of interpretation here set forth that the historic Judeo-Christian doctrine of sin was developed. The "orthodox" theory of "original sin," because of its association with the notion of Adam's Fall "in whom we sinned all" as well as with an ascetic conception of sex, has been rightly abandoned by religious liberals. It is doubtful, however, if there is any word available that has more profound metaphysical implications than the word "sin," for the word has the theonomous reference necessary for any truly theological category.³⁸ But, whether the liberal uses the word "sin" or not, he cannot correct

³⁷In this connection it is interesting to note the contrast between the popular conception of sin as rooted in "the flesh," and Luther's more profound conception of it as rooted "not in 'the flesh,' that is . . . 'the inferior and grosser affections,' but in the most exalted and noble powers of man . . . that is, in the reason and in the will." It should be added, however, that Luther, like St. Paul, did not maintain consistency with regard to this interpretation of the nature of sin and the role of "the flesh."

³⁸The use of the word "sin," of course, provides no *guarantee* of religious depth or of philosophical adequacy. Many liberals who use the word have secularized or moralized it. (And, correspondingly, many conservatives have de-moralized it.) As Gerald Birney Smith pointed out some years ago, the sociologizing and psychologizing of the conception of sin by modern liberalism has had the consequence of depriving the conception of its "metaphysical content." "Sin" as a theological category is no merely ethical or sociological or psychological concept. Like the doctrine of the divinity of man, the doctrine of sin—properly understood—attempts to give metaphysical depth to an aspect of human nature. The two doctrines taken together epitomize the paradoxical character of the human condition, the paradoxical relationship of man to the creativity that he both shares and perverts. Indeed, one

his "too jocund" view of life until he recognizes that there is in human nature a deep-seated and universal tendency for both individuals and groups to ignore the demands of mutuality and thus to waste freedom or abuse it by devotion to the idols of the tribe, the theatre, the cave, and the market place. The old triumvirate of tyrants in the human soul, the *libido sciendi*, the *libido sentiendi*, and the *libido dominandi*, is just as powerful today as it ever was, and no man can ignore its tyranny with impunity. It cannot be denied that religious liberalism has neglected these aspects of human nature in its zeal to proclaim the spark of divinity in man. We may call these tendencies by any name we wish, but we do not escape their destructive influence by a conspiracy of silence concerning them. Certainly, the practice of shunning the word "sin" because "it makes one feel gloomy and pious," has little more justification than the use of the ostrich method in other areas of life.³⁹

Obviously, a correction here does not involve any lending of support to the old view of the total depravity of man, at least not among liberals. Indeed, the expression of fear in this respect would be comparable to the propagandist device of calling a New Dealer a communist. We ought to have enough faith in man and God to believe that even a "realistic and credible doctrine of man" will not separate us from the love of God. Certainly, we ought to be willing to take the risk that we would incur by giving more serious consideration than we have in recent years to the

may say that an understanding of the metaphysical implications of the derived dignity of human nature (the doctrine of *Imago dei*) requires a correspondingly metaphysical interpretation of the universal perversion or frustration of man's essential dignity (the doctrine of sin). H. Shelton Smith (*Faith and Nurture* [New York, 1941], pp. 93-99) has succinctly described the metaphysical shallowness of the conception of sin dominant in religious liberalism in the past century.

³⁹A friend of mine who is a theologian tells of a conversation he had some time ago, after he had given an address at one of our conferences in the East. He had been stressing the centrality of the ideas of sin and repentance in the Christian religion. Following the address, a minister approached him and, after thanking him for the address, said that he was sorry to hear a discourse that was so gloomy. He said Jesus was a man whom people liked to have around and his gospel is one of joy. Whereupon my friend replied: "That is true. But I thought the ideas of sin and repentance were very much stressed by Jesus. Did he not say: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent ye?'" The minister, not to be worsted, replied, "Oh, yes, that does stand on the record. But that was one of Jesus' weaker moments."

sinful nature of man, and even to the biblical myth of the Fall as a description of the contradictions in human nature.⁴⁰

If the earlier intellectualism exalted man into an archangel, the new voluntarism is right in viewing him, in the words of Charles Lamb about Coleridge, as an archangel slightly damaged. This change of attitude has long been evident among the poets. Malcolm

⁴⁰Nor would we have to begin by studying the so-called "orthodox" and "neo-Calvinist" theologians. Dean Sperry some years ago set forth a sociological reinterpretation of the doctrine of original sin especially stressing the fact that every man shares the guilt for the injustices and inequalities of society. Cf. *The Disciplines of Liberty* (New Haven, 1921), chap. 4, "A Modern Doctrine of Original Sin."

On the metaphysical level, one of the most profound studies of the human condition in terms of the myth of the Fall is to be found in the essay of the German philosopher Schelling, entitled *Of Human Freedom* (1809). In this connection, Rowland Gray-Smith has performed a valuable service by the publication of his doctoral dissertation on *God in the Philosophy of Schelling* (Philadelphia, 1933). For a more popular and "literary," though metaphysical, interpretation of the Christian doctrine of original sin, see Thomas Mann's discussion in the symposium, *I Believe*, ed. Clifton Fadiman (New York, 1939), pp. 189-194. On the ethical level, one of the significant defenses of the tragic view of life and one that emphasizes (perhaps over-emphasizes) "the radically evil will of man" is to be found in Immanuel Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason* (1793).

For the psychological level, Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York, 1930),—especially his discussion of the so-called "destruction instinct"—should not be neglected. The writings of Fromm, Horney, and Lasswell are also pertinent here. Cf. also Anton T. Boisen, "The Problem of Sin and Salvation in the Light of Psychopathology," *The Journal of Religion*, XXII (1942), 288-301. The contrast between the psychoanalytic theory of cleavages and the old Liberal doctrine of harmony of interests may be taken as typical of the great change in the reputation of human nature. Cf. on this point Lionel Trilling's review of Karen Horney's *Self Analysis* (1942) in which he criticizes her Liberal theory of "the progressive psyche," *The Nation*, Sept. 12, 1942, pp. 215-217.

For Unitarian expositions of the conception of sin, see H. W. Bellows *Restatement of Christian Doctrine* (New York, 1860), chap. 3; J. E. Carpenter and P. H. Wicksteed, *Studies in Theology* (London, 1903), chap. 5; J. W. Chadwick, *Old and New Unitarian Beliefs* (Boston, 1894), chap. 2; James Drummond, *Studies in Christian Doctrine* (London, 1908), pp. 203-239; E. Emerton, *Unitarian Thought* (New York, 1911), chap. 3; C. C. Everett, *Theism and the Christian Faith* (New York, 1909), chaps. 21-24; L. A. Garrard, *Duty and the Will of God* (Oxford, 1938); James Martineau, *The Seat of Authority in Religion* (New York, 1890), Book IV, chap. 3; George Batchelor, "A Modern View of Retribution," American Unitarian Association, tract No. 261; S. M. Crothers, "The Faith of a Free Church," American Unitarian Association tract No. 98, pp. 27 ff.; Minot Simons, "Redemption or Recovery?" American Unitarian Association tract No. 256; S. H. Mellone, *God and the World* (London, 1919), chap. 8; T. G. Soares, *Three Typical Beliefs* (Chicago, 1937), pp. 83-90; Oliver Martin, "Sin and Sinners," *THE JOURNAL OF LIBERAL RELIGION*, III (1941), 3-10; Alexander Winston, "The Metaphysical Status of Evil," *ibid.*, III (1941), 100-106.

Cowley in an article on "What Poets are Saying"⁴¹ points out that the principal themes of contemporary verse are (1) the psycho-social parallelism to which reference has been made, (2) the sense of doom, (3) the sense of personal guilt, and (4) a sense of comradeship in the attempt to confront our common fate.

This change may seem to represent a swing toward a one-sided pessimism. If so, it may be explained as an illustration of the old adage that extremes breed extremes. Or, as Thomas Hardy once put it, when prurience thrusts the human shape beneath the stream, the first part of the anatomy that will reappear when the pressure is released will be the posterior.

But the change need not involve a shift from optimism to pessimism. The poets to whom Malcolm Cowley refers counter-balance the sense of doom with a sense of comradeship. "We must love one another or die," says W. H. Auden, a poet who has been drawn by the present cultural crisis into a new appreciation of Christian doctrine. But, unfortunately, not all the poets and not all the "Christian" theologians have achieved this balance between optimism and pessimism, a balance implicit in the Christian doctrines of sin and redemption. This lack of balance in our day takes the form of a sadistic and undiscriminating attack on all ideas of progress, and in some instances it takes also the form of a seemingly complete renunciation of even the valid principles of freedom which come to us from the older Liberalism.

* * *

In the face of these renunciations, contemporary liberalism has, as we have said, a positive, creative task to perform. To be sure, the failures and the perversions of Liberalism must be recognized before there can be a reasonable hope of moving in the direction of a truly liberal society. But humanity will only be brought to greater suffering under greater tyrannies if the liberal principles of freedom are abandoned. These principles must be given new forms that are relevant to the demands of a modern economy and that will prepare the way for a transformed liberalism and a transformed liberal society.^{41a}

⁴¹Saturday Review of Literature, May 3, 1941.

^{41a}Cf. the author's article, "Freud, Mannheim, and the Liberal Doctrine of Man," THE JOURNAL OF LIBERAL RELIGION, II (Winter, 1941), 107-11;

In the judgment of the present writer, however, the widespread skepticism concerning the principles of Laisser-faire has become so acute (even among "liberals") that there is grave danger of our losing our grasp on the principles of freedom. For this reason, it might be well for liberals, both secular and religious, to clear away much of the confusion by a serious study of the classical writings of Liberalism, and especially of the writings of Thomas Jefferson and John Stuart Mill. For, so long as liberalism in any form continues to exist in the world, the thought of these men will be relevant for it.

We need also to achieve objectivity sufficiently to reexamine the idea of progress. The older idea of progress has been tried and found wanting. But the idea of progress, like the idea of freedom, should not be abandoned; it should be revised. It is a fact that, despite all the perversions of sinful man, there has been progress in history. We ought soon to stop bandying the word and acquire a fairly clear idea as to the areas in which unilinear progress is not possible and the areas in which it has been achieved and is still achievable. The older Liberalism was not only sound, it was also Christian in holding before men some vision of the End of human history. In doing so, it was maintaining some continuity with the Christian doctrines of creation and redemption. Thus it was asserting also the Christian view of history as the history of salvation. On the other hand, it was Utopian in failing to distinguish between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man that is possible on earth. And it was naïve in so far as it supposed that progress is a natural trend or in so far as it overlooked the tragic character of historical achievement. But the correction of these errors will not be found in denying all meaning to the idea of progress. It lies rather in our acquiring a sense of the dialectical nature of man and of the human situation, a sense of the splendor and promise and meaningfulness of life, and a recognition of the fact that all human achievement and meaningfulness are asserted only in the teeth of obstruction and of ever possible perversion. To overlook the reality of human sin is to invite disaster, or at least disillusionment. To long for a time

also, Edward A. Shils, "Irrationality and Planning," *ibid.*, II (Winter, 1941), 148-153; Mannheim, *op. cit.*; Meyer, *op. cit.*; Paul Tillich, "War Aims," reprinted from *The Protestant*, 1941.

when freedom will not be perverted is to long for a time when life shall have lost its meaning, for the moment freedom can no longer be perverted, it will no longer be freedom. This is not pessimism; it is simply the recognition of the fact that freedom, the basis of meaningful human existence, is also the ever-present occasion for the perversion of existence.

It is to be regretted that some exponents of the Christian doctrine of sin in our day have been unable to state the paradox of the human condition without giving the impression of having surrendered to "black and bleak pessimism." Nor are all these extreme pessimists to be found among the so-called neo-Calvinists. The writer heard an eminent Unitarian preacher say recently, "When I look down into the human soul, do I see the spark of divinity that Channing prated about? No! I see the tangled vipers of greed, lust, and ambition." This statement was followed by the assertion that modern civilization is doomed and that we are now headed for half a millenium of the Dark Ages again. Such histrionic hyperboles must be interpreted as a perversion of mind and spirit as well as an implicit denial of man's potentiality as a child of God, and of the ever-present possibility of repentance.

* * *

But extreme pessimism is not the only danger of the tragic view of life that is now emerging. Just as rationalism had its characteristic besetting sin, namely, "feeling terribly at ease in Zion" and "cuddling up to the Almighty," so voluntarism has its own peculiar danger. Certain types of voluntarism, it must be remembered, have often been infected with irrationalism. Indeed, they have even exalted irrationalism into a virtue. Duns Scotus illustrates this tendency when he urges acceptance of the Catholic faith without question and without reference to reason. National socialism takes the same attitude of authoritarian subjection to blood and soil. Observers from the Orient have long noted this tendency to irrationalism in the Christian Occident. Charles Chauncy valiantly opposed it in the New Lights, and many oppose it today as it appears in Nazism and Barthianism. But such irrationalism is not the only alternative to rationalism. We find keen rational analysis in great historic exemplars of voluntarism, for example, most of all in the Buddha, and to a marked degree in St. Paul and St. Augustine; or to cite three modern examples, in Jonathan Ed-

wards, Ernst Troeltsch, and Rudolph Otto. What is needed, of course, is that combination of *logos* and *dynamis* which can effect a vitalizing tension between the attitude of distance and the attitude of decision. One of the best characterizations of this sort of relation between the reason and the will is suggested in the metaphor repeated by most of the voluntarists of the Middle Ages and especially by the anti-Thomists; they compared reason to a torch lighting the paths ahead, and the will under God's grace, the whole self, they said, both guides the reason and chooses the path to be taken. We see, then, that a recognition of the large role of the will, a recognition of the fundamental significance of the basic orientation and predisposition of a man, does not necessarily involve a depreciation of reason.⁴² Indeed, the voluntaristic theory of the nature of man is itself the result of an intellectual and rational analysis of the human condition.

* * *

The older Liberalism underestimated the destructive possibilities of the contradictions in human nature and was thus unrealistic. It offered salvation through the "restraints of reason." But the "restraints of reason" are inadequate for entering the "war within the cave." Merely intellectual education is not enough. The world has many educated people who know how to reason, and they reason very well; but, curiously enough, many of them fail to examine the pre-established premises from which they reason, premises that turn out on examination to be anti-social, protective camouflages of power. Where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also. And where his heart is, there will be his reason and his premises. The "theoretical attitude of distance" needs for its completion the existential "attitude of decision." St. Paul underlines this fact when he speaks of the foolishness of the wise.⁴³

⁴² Jacques Barzun wisely rejects W. T. Stace's idea (set forth in *The Destiny of Western Man* [New York, 1942]) that "Western man's destiny is to put reason and sympathy above will," that Greece represents the fountain of Reason, Palestine the fount of Sympathy, and Germany the tradition of Will. See Dr. Barzun's review in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, Mar. 21, 1942. The present writer trusts that the discussion above has shown the superficiality of generalizations of this sort.

⁴³ Professor Robert L. Calhoun of Yale emphasizes this point when he writes: "Schopenhauer's devastating analysis of the futility of education and all cultural refinement as a safeguard against inner frustration is in principle as true now as when he wrote it. Current history is driving home

The element of conflict inherent in man and in man's relations with his fellows can, as St. Paul knew, be dealt with only by a regenerated will, a will committed to the principles of liberty and justice and love, a will prepared by a faith, a decision, a commitment sufficient to cope with the principalities and powers of the world.⁴⁴

Kant, who in this respect stands in the Pauline tradition, suggests that the *root* of evil must be touched. What is needed, he says, is not piecemeal reformation with minor adjustments of character and conduct, but an alteration of the basis of character and of the habitual way in which the mind works. Nor is this reformation a "conversion" of the evangelistic order, a conversion that takes place at one moment and is then complete: Martin Luther came much nearer to describing it when he said that our whole life should be a repentance (*metánoia*) that brings forth fruits meet for repentance. Nor is this "conversion" merely what a man does with his solitariness. It is a conversion that affects his social relations and brings about some conversion in society.

These principles can be stated in non-theological terms also. The way in which the reason operates depends upon the aims and interests around which the personality is organized. Morality has as its basis an underived commitment to certain guiding principles and purposes. Thus the basis of choice is not irrational in the sense of being contrary to reason, but it is non-rational in that the direction taken by choice is determined by the evidence or

his theory with the hammer blows of fact. Current psychology is helping us to see why intellectual and moral education does not get to the root of the trouble, and how profoundly man needs to be made over. But all these insights are new variations on a very old theme, which St. Paul set out clearly in the seventh chapter of his letter to the Romans, and which has been central in Christianity ever since." *What Is Man?* ("Hazen Books on Religion," New York, 1939), p. 69.

⁴⁴Dean Sperry says, concerning the Christian word for love: "The term *agape*—which is Paul's word—is not a word which concerns the senses or emotions. A classical scholar who has meditated much on an exact translation says that whatever else the word *agape* may mean, it means in the first instance 'a steady set of the will.'" Willard L. Sperry, *What We Mean by Religion* (New York, 1940), p. 121.

See in this connection Erich Fromm's brilliant observations on love from the point of view of a voluntaristic psychology, *op. cit.*, pp. 510 ff.

The reader should bear in mind here that the *agape* of early Christianity was viewed as a gift of grace, an aspect of the inbreaking kingdom. Cf. Rudolph Otto, *The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man* (London, 1938), and Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (New York, 1932), Vol. I; also, Meyer, *op. cit.*, III (Winter, 1942), 139 ff.

principles that can be applied.⁴⁵ Accordingly, the decisive quality of a personality is its commitment, for the basic commitment determines the self and its interests, instead of being determined by them.⁴⁶

The way in which a personality will interpret its freedom and use its reason depends, then, upon the character of the self and upon its relation to and attitude toward the rest of reality. A readiness even to enter into discussion for the sake of reaching agreement (or of reaching at least a common understanding) depends upon a man's total character and not upon his intellectual capacities alone. It depends, in short, upon a proper relation to the creative ground of meaning and existence. Moreover, science as well as religion, politics as well as art, properly flourish only when the primary quality of human character or integrity is the foundation and when that integrity has a positive and critical relation to larger integrities, social and metaphysical.

We have now seen the ways in which the rationalistic tradition has optimistically taken for granted the idea of unity in the world, in society, and in the structure of the individual psyche; we have also seen how it stresses the role of reason in such a way as to offer a truncated view of the functions operative in both society and the individual and also in such a way as to encourage both separative individualism and "the attitude of distance." The voluntaristic outlook, we have seen, aims to correct and supplement this view by stressing the significance of the alogical factors in existence, in human nature and history, by emphasizing also "the tragic sense of life" arising from man's entanglement within its deep-going conflicts, and by stressing the significance of the creative depths of the entire personality (and of the group to which it belongs) for the dynamic achievement of relevant and vigorous action.

* * *

Theology is, in the language of Bonaventura, "an affective science," the science of the love of God, and the function of the church

⁴⁵Cf. Charner M. Perry, "The Arbitrary as Basis for Rational Morality," *Ethics*, XLIII (1939), 127.

⁴⁶For the role of commitment in politics, see Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York, 1936); for its role in science, see J. D. Bernal, *The Social Function of Science* (London, 1939) and Robert S. Lynd, *Knowledge for What?* (Princeton, 1939).

is to bring men into communion with a group wherein the divine power of transformation and the ethical standards rooted in it are operative. When we say operative, we mean that this power is capable of changing men, of eliciting commitment to a way of life that makes a difference in their attitude toward themselves, their fellow-men, and God; in short, it aids them in the achieving of voluntary community.⁴⁷ Only by some such commitment can we, in Channing's words, be always young for liberty. And without such a commitment, we become content with "philosophic" objectivity and "distance" that insulate us from the source of true vitality, from openness to the power of the Spirit. We become attached to the forms that have given us our cherished securities; or, as Augustine puts it, we give our devotion to creatures rather than to the creative power from which issue all forms and all true vitality. We substitute our aspirations and "virtues," our reason and our moralism, for God's power and goodness. Thus our rationalism and our moralism "miss and distort reality and the real possibilities for improvement of the human situation."⁴⁸ They give us a "poise" that freezes the knees and keeps us erect and "harmonious" in face of the divine demand for repentance, for change of heart and mind. The early Christians (and also the Dionysians) saw that the creative and redemptive power is not subject to domestication by means of these techniques. It breaks into a human situation destroying, transforming old forms and creating new ones, manifesting the expulsive and creative power of a new affection,—the *amor dei*.

Thus we are driven back to a view similar to the one that Charles Chauncy opposed in 1743. It is not reason alone, but reason inspired by "raised affections" that is necessary for salvation. Man becomes what he loves. Not that information and technique are dispensable. Even a St. Francis with commitment to the highest would be impotent when confronted with a case of appendicitis if he did not recognize the malady and did not know what to do. One sector of the problems of society is its intellectual problems,—problems of statecraft, economics, pedagogy, and the like. Here no amount of good will alone can suffice.

⁴⁷On this whole problem of the relation between decision and transformation, see E. E. Aubrey, *Man's Search for Himself* (Nashville, 1940).

⁴⁸Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

But something of the spirit of St. Francis is indispensable if the benefits of science and of society are to be in widest commonalty spread, and, for that matter, if even the intellectual problems are to be dealt with adequately. The desire to diagnose injustice as an intellectual problem as well as the power of action to achieve a new form of justice requires "raised affections," a vitality that can break through old forms of behavior and create new patterns of community. But the raising of the affections is a much harder thing to accomplish than even the education of the mind; it is especially difficult among those who think they have found security. Spiritually significant change takes place only when a man discovers that he must make a decision for a way of life that distinguishes him and his whole orientation from the man who has not made such a decision. As Kant puts it, "the feelings must be raised to the pitch of enthusiasm where we are disposed to make the greatest sacrifices for the sake of principle." If religious liberals could learn that no significant change can be initiated before men become *committed* to liberal principles, a new strategy would not be far behind.

This element of commitment, of change of heart, of decision, so much emphasized in the Gospels, has been neglected by religious liberalism, and that is the prime source of its enfeeblement. We liberals are largely an uncommitted and therefore a self-frustrating people. Our first task, then, is to restore to liberalism its own dynamic and its own prophetic genius. We need conversion within ourselves. Only by some such revolution can we be seized by a prophetic power that will enable us to proclaim both the judgment and the love of God. Only by some such conversion can we be possessed by a love that will not let us go. And when that has taken place, we shall know that it is not our wills alone that have acted; we shall know that the ever-living Creator and Re-creator has again been brooding over the face of the deep and out of the depths bringing forth new life.

Book Reviews

SEMANTICS IN A NEW KEY¹

If semantics is defined, appropriately to its etymology, as the science of meaning, it is self-evidently the most basic of all sciences. For the first requirement of any science, as of any discourse and any belief, is that it shall mean something. Certainly the world is too full of windbag utterances; political harangues, rhapsodic advertising, metaphysics, theology, and quasi-science all have a lot to answer for. Deflation is perhaps our modern confessional. Religion especially, since above all it is concerned with the ultimately orientative meanings of life, must welcome the discipline of semantics—the challenge to dissociate meaning from rhetoric, to cultivate directness of semantic intent rather than evasion.

Unfortunately, most of the recent tracts and textbooks flaunting a semantic label have undertaken to "clarify" meanings only by translating them into semantic units such as are found constituting the language of exact science or else such as click with the common-sense practices of "normal" men of our time—that is to say, men unencumbered by either heightened sensitivity or transcendent faith. Behind this method lies the assumption that only what is, in principle, publicly verifiable by normal observers can be really *meant*. Much of the new semantics turns out to be a streamline version of that ancient adversary, materialism.

Professor Langer, too, is a semanticist. The new key in which she approvingly finds the most promising strains of contemporary philosophy to be pitched is a semantic key, whose tonic note is the idea of every datum as a *sign* (and in the interesting cases a *symbol*) which means something more than the datum itself. But while this "generative idea" is accepted in principle by many contemporary writers, Mrs. Langer's development and application of it is distinctively important. Her distinction consists in having formulated clearly and integrally what has heretofore been largely implicit and scattered, and in her original handling of what I take to be the three root-problems of theoretical semantics: the nature of a symbol as distinguished from a mere sign, the types of relation between symbol and meaning, and the nature and locus of meaning.

A sign, in the broadest sense, is any datum that means—potentially, therefore, any datum at all. "Even animal mentality is built up on a primitive semantic; it is the power of learning, by trial and error, that certain phenomena in the world are signs of certain others, existing or about to exist; adaptation to an environment is its purpose, and hence the measure of its success." Man's superiority to other animals lies not merely, as instrumentalists and behaviorists appear to think, in his wider range of signs, quicker learning by trial and error, and consequently more successful adaptation to a more complex environment. Such superiority is merely quantitative. Man's qualitative and essential differentiation from all other animals

¹PHILOSOPHY IN A NEW KEY, A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art. By Susanne K. Langer. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 313 pages. \$3.50.

Mrs. Langer finds to be this: that he uses signs not only as *signals* to indicate things and react to them, but also as *symbols* to represent them and hold them before the mind in contemplation. Let an intelligent dog hear the name of his master and he pricks up his ears in expectation. "You cannot make any communication to him that is not taken as a signal of something immediately forthcoming. His mind is a simple and direct *transmitter* of messages from the world to his motor centers." But let an eighteen-month-old baby hear the word "Mummy," and frequently without any attempt to seek its mother or any show of expectation that she will appear the child simply becomes interested and repeats the word in pleased contemplation of the suggested idea. (My own parental experience amply confirms this observation.) The human mind is not merely a transmitter but a *transformer*. Symbols are used in order to contemplate things, to talk and think about them, "not to direct our eyes and ears and noses toward them. Instead of announcers of things they are reminders." And since the use of symbols appears to be confined to man, Langer proposes the highly suggestive theory that man's basic need, the one function that most truly distinguishes him from beasts, is the *need of symbolization*, the need to form *conceptions* of things.

With respect to the manner of representing meanings Mrs. Langer distinguishes between *discursive* and *presentational* forms of symbolism. Discursive symbols have a vocabulary and a syntax, presentational not. A vocabulary implies that there are semantic units, each having an identical core of meaning in different contexts—notably the dictionary meanings of words and the stipulated meanings of technical symbols. A syntax involves an ordering of signs for purposes of exposition, in a manner quite independent of the order of what is signified. E.g., the sentence "He is dining" refers to a serially ordered activity—perhaps soup, meat, dessert. Also the sentence itself has a syntactical order. But these two orders are mutually indifferent; "he" does not stand for soup, "is" for meat, "dining" for dessert! Presentational symbols, on the other hand—photographs, paintings, maps, blueprints, holy objects, etc.—have no vocabulary and no independent syntax. Lacking syntax they are *iconic*—representing their object through a kind of imitation of it or, more vaguely, through what I suppose might be called evocation by emotional congruity. And lacking a vocabulary, being made up of no stable semantic elements, the presentational symbol is untranslatable. "The dog is dead" and "Le chien est mort" are semantically interchangeable, the choice between them being governed by convenience. But *Hamlet* is semantically non-interchangeable with any prose synopsis or foreign-language paraphrase; likewise a religiously realized experience does not mean quite the same thing as any theological interpretation of it.

The third and perhaps most important of what I have called the root problems—the locus of a symbol's meaning—Mrs. Langer discusses first. Since Descartes and Locke the problem of semantic reference has been more or less tied up with psychophysical dualism, the dichotomy of all reality into inner experience and outer world. This "generative idea," at first potent and useful in that it defined for post-Renaissance science a world of strictly calculable entities, gradually encouraged the view (suggested in the fourth

book of Locke's *Essay*) that any experienced datum is something "mental" which refers to a "physical" reality—a reality, that is to say, tractable to experimental procedures and unencumbered by such entities as value, purpose, mind, and God. This dualistic dogma has become so thoroughly a part of our modern way of thinking that to question its truth strikes most men, unschooled in the art of philosophical reorientation, as paradox. It underlies the current tendency to brand any entity of a non-scientific character as "merely subjective." It underlies such dilemmas as, "Does God really exist (in essentially the same sense that the moon exists) or is he merely an idea in men's minds?" Langer, like many another contemporary philosopher, regards this implicit dualism as having outlived its usefulness. She builds on the principle that "our sense-data are primarily symbols"—not primarily mental facts. They may refer in any direction at all, or in several at once. Their meanings may be larger or vaguer or more fluid than the referents that constitute the physical world. This is particularly the case with the great "life-symbols" of sacrament and myth, to each of which a chapter is devoted. The present theory of symbolism justifies, as alternative theories on the whole do not, a serious view of such phenomena. "A theory of mind whose keynote is the symbolific function, whose problem is the morphology of significance, is not obliged to draw that bifurcating line between science and folly." It sees men's artistic and religious expressions not as lapses of rational interest, not as elaborations of the play-instinct without cognitive validity, but as "inspired by the rational need of envisagement and understanding."

Dartmouth College

PHILIP WHEELWRIGHT.

EDUCATION AND LIFE

We should be grateful for the very critical attempt that this liberal European scholar has made to contribute to the important trend in education today that is called "integration"—or the necessity for recasting educational method and procedure so that it may everywhere contribute to the harmonic growth of the individual as a total unitary being.¹ It serves as an academic treatment of the same trend dealt with in a strictly pedagogical way in the volume *Integration*, by Thomas Hopkins and others.

Neither of these books, however, is nearly so satisfactory for the purpose as Emerson of a hundred years ago is to a person who understands Emersonianism, or John Dewey's *Our Common Faith* and *Freedom and Culture*, or as Joseph K. Hart's *Inside Experience* are to the alert American mind that is a natural outgrowth of American patterns of thought.

Dr. Ulich calls his philosophy "Self-transcendent empiricism" which might just as well refer to the main currents of American thought from William Bradford, the Quakers, the authentic exponents of American puri-

¹FUNDAMENTALS OF DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION: AN INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY. By Robert Ulich. American Book Company, 1940. 343 pages with bibliography and index. \$2.25.

tanism, and our philosophic tradition from Alcott, Thoreau, and Emerson, through C. S. Peirce, William James, James Mark Baldwin, down to John Dewey. In short, American "practical idealism"—or more properly, functional idealism—the despair of European scholarship to understand—we have always tried to "integrate" in the world of experience rather than the world of discourse; and so the manipulation of it through the traditional processes of academic scholarship, seems to the American mind belabored and pedantic.

Nonetheless Dr. Ulich's is a tolerant well-trained mind, distinctly Aristotelian in its behavior, and essentially Hegelian in its design. This large tolerance assumes at times the bland urbanity of the men of good will and looks upon every element in experience as in conflict with its opposite, while attempting to reach a kind of synthetic democracy that, however, has overtones of the conflict between the intellectually élite and the unsynthesized body politic to whom the élite should give cultural form.

In general everything is considered from the yes and no angles; the whole process of attempted clarification is through a balancing of complicated sets of opposite "values," that leads from "tolerance" to a kind of freedom of intellectual oscillation, which to Dr. Ulich is a necessary dialectic, and to John Dewey the limitation of either-or thinking. There are good words said for Aristotle, Plato, Plotinus, Thomas Aquinas, Spinoza, Kant, von Haller, Herbart, von Humboldt, Pestalozzi, James, Dewey, Köhler, Allport, and McDougall; but, on the other hand there are negative words said of them, too. Indeed this dialectical analysis of the historical approach in order to get anywhere is precisely what makes this book so difficult to the experiential realist who prefers to start from where he is, no matter where he is going.

Dialectical synthesis of conflicting opposites is the least effective of roads to true organic harmonization, and as a method of education it is the least congenial of all to the experientially democratic mind.

And all this in spite of the fact that there is everywhere a generous tolerance of possibilities. By fits and starts there are allowances for rationalism and mysticism, for semantics, for symbolism, for the past, for the present,—but not for "relativism" or for the future. Nowhere in the book is there more disappointment for the reader than in Chapter IV, "The Problem of Values." Here dialectical synthesis fails utterly. One turns for refreshing clarity to Dewey's discussion of the philosophy of experience and the psychology of realization.

And yet in this very chapter at the end are a few pages that attempt to justify the social studies and the natural sciences as the core curriculum of modern education, and respectful reference is made to the "modern organic curriculum," with which conscientious educators have been concerned for some time.

By far the most pretentious effort has been made in Chapter VIII, "Education and Religion." Here the deep respect of the author for "natural religion" is manifest, and his section called, "Critical evaluation of religious education" shows that he is concerned with authentic religious experience

rather than with mere profession of a religion. But in the very section where he says, "It is a fundamental necessity for the development of a new religious spirit in modern society that religious education be lifted to the level of other fields of education and research," his dialectical sense of lurking antinomies leads him to say immediately afterwards, "It would betray a considerable lack of realism to believe (*sic*) that the goals alluded to can be reached before it is too late."

In short, in discussing the necessity for reverence he fails of the necessary faith in life,—which is a poor "introduction to a philosophy of education."

Boston University

EDWARD A. POST

A CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN MORALE

Walton Cole's *Realistic Courage*¹ is a contribution, in an hour when it is most wanted, to American morale. The book consists of the substance of the Minns lectures for 1942, delivered under the auspices of the American Unitarian Association. The date is significant. The lectures were not merely delivered in 1942; they were aimed at mental and spiritual attitudes in 1942. The author, primarily a preacher, has the true preacher's gift of divining people's needs. Many readers will find in this book a primary immediate need met. Its title well expresses both its purpose and the way its purpose is fulfilled. The need of the hour is for courage, but only the courage that faces the facts realistically will do. Mr. Cole's medicament is no mere shot in the arm, whose effect will fade when tomorrow's newspaper headlines are read. He directs his readers to the ultimate source of courage, in a religious faith that the common man of 1942 can understand and hold to.

In the first chapter "Defense against Defeatism," Mr. Cole faces without evasion the facts that make defeatism plausible; but he points out that the ideas of those who for the moment are winning in the world conflict are based on contempt for human nature. The future he shows belongs to those whose faith in man, despite reverses, is unshaken. In his second chapter he presents evidence that a courageous faith in man is America's great heritage. "There are those," he declares, "who believe that the fate of American democracy hangs by a slender thread. The thread will hold,—provided that we are true to our heritage." In his third chapter, assuming more definitely his role of doctor to the disillusioned, Mr. Cole writes a prescription for those already contaminated by the contagion. He suggests the study of biography as a cure. By many examples of human courage undefeated by seemingly insuperable handicaps, he supports Emerson's defiant assertion (so frequently quoted as to constitute a kind of text for the book) that "the powers of the Soul are commensurate with its needs, all experience to the contrary notwithstanding." The succeeding three chapters call for "confidence in the human venture," foreseeing the doom

¹REALISTIC COURAGE. By Walton E. Cole. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1942.
179 pp. \$1.50.

of tyranny and envisioning the coming victory of man; they point to an "open future," towards which the people march as in Sandburg's poem,—in grief, in the night, nevertheless crying "Where to? What next?"; and, finally, they suggest the unfailing resources of religion to those who are on the march.

In many ways, particularly in the use of illustrative material, this book is a model to those who would preach or write to the popular mind.

FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERALS IN LENT 1943¹

This year's Lenten Manual of the American Unitarian Association, compiled by its President, Frederick May Eliot, is described in the foreword as "providing sources of plain loyalty to an inherited faith." To this end its readings and prayers are selected from the writings of Unitarians, from Channing down to fathers and brethren who were with us only yesterday. In turning the pages one is struck by the literary quality as well as by the inspirational value of passages from the writings of the less well-known men. One is interested to read a paragraph on "deep-sea Unitarians" by Amandus Norman, minister and leader for half a century of a whole countryside surrounding Hanska, Minnesota,—a Norwegian-American whose Americanism put to shame the patriotism of many of the older stocks. One finds help in prayers by L. R. Daniels, physician-turned-preacher in middle life who gave great service in small fields and left two sons to the Unitarian ministry today. Those who in this little Manual come for the first time upon prayers by G. R. Freeman, composed for the Meadville chapel a generation ago, will be struck by the freshness and the restraint of their expression; they suit the mood of today; they might have been written yesterday.

Ranging through volumes of sermons and prayers Doctor Eliot has found many selections that are apposite in our troubled times. Those who begin reading this booklet on Ash Wednesday (March 10th) a page each day till Easter, will be rewarded each day by a phrase, or the suggestion of a thought, to meet present needs.

The Meadville Theological School,
Chicago, Ill.

SYDNEY B. SNOW.

THE MEANING OF AMERICA

Here is an authentic message to America.² It is in the vein of the best democratic tradition—that of Walt Whitman and Abraham Lincoln; and its outlook is as realistic as "power politics."

Mr. Davies' thesis is that America is moving with the inevitability of historical processes toward world ascendancy. Not by conscious design, but by the necessity of events, we must assume world leadership in the building of the kind of world in which our kind of life can exist. Other

¹FAITH FORBIDS FEAR: A Lenten Manual for 1943. Boston: The Beacon Press. 47 pp. 5 cents.

²AMERICAN DESTINY. By A. Powell Davies. Boston: Beacon Press, 1942. 120 pp. \$1.50.

nations with similar needs can only collaborate and follow, for they lack the power to lead. All tyrannies are doomed for the sufficient reason that they stand in the way of America's road to liberty—liberty for ourselves and liberty for the world.

Our past and our present are not the result of blueprints but of the dynamics of the American Revolution; and our future does not depend on plans and schemes but on the necessities of an irresistible movement toward the democracy of mankind.

The purpose of the author, as he himself states it, is to indicate "first, the place of America in the present world of conflict, as governed by relentless fact and by the moulding trends of previous national history; second, the indispensable requirements of a world in total upheaval; third, the nature of American inheritance and the direction of its natural consequence; fourth, the dangers of reluctance and the elements which tend to dissipate our national heritage; fifth, the realities with which a genuine moral faith must reckon; and, sixth, the affirmation of the faith itself."

American Destiny could be criticized for overemphasis on "historical inevitability" but as a spiritual tonic for a fighting nation it could hardly be praised too highly. The process of debunking American history had gone too far; there was need for the thrilling confidence in American democracy that this book inspires.

Abraham Lincoln Center
Chicago, Ill.

CURTIS W. REESE

GOD, MAN, AND BEAUTY

Professional philosophers will recognize that this work¹ fits into none of the established systems. The author makes a bow, with an apparently serious face, before the altars of the sacred categories but his devotions are about as fervid as those of a Unitarian reciting the Athanasian creed. In spite of his serious verbal recognition of the importance of epistemology, the two centuries of scholarly wrestling with that specter affects him no more than it would any naive realist. The book was evidently written out of personal need. A mind, troubled by the frustration and chaos of the modern world, is here seeking security and a way of salvation.

The author finds security in an idea of God which yields a pure determinism, effective in the social realm as a cosmic law of compensation; the way of salvation for the individual is through the practice of true selfishness.

No one can know what God is. The idea is a "justifiable invention of man to explain the mystery of existence." Natural laws are God's only revelation to men. But whatever "He, She or It" is, God is the creator of beauty. He has made the world perfect in beauty and happiness, and men are the "automata of God." "The responsibility for whatever we do is His, because it is His universe and His will that is served. As for the responsibility being taken off men's shoulders for their acts, we need not

¹THE RELIGION OF BEAUTY. By Rev. Wayne H. Steele. Chicago: The Hobbert Press, 1940. 324 pages. \$3.00.

worry, because God will not allow us to do anything He does not want done."

To realize the good world, the religion of beauty calls for the practice of true selfishness. "Unselfish love does not and cannot exist." All men are trying to fulfil their desires and through the ages have failed because of pseudo-selfish methods. Man has fallen into the four errors—of trying to get something for nothing, believing he is greatly superior or inferior to other members of the species, failing to seek first the good will of others, and competing with others rather than cooperating with them. He must learn to be truly selfish, an artist in living, if the race is to be unified in that perfection of harmony which will yield to each individual complete and enduring moral happiness. Since beauty is relative, the individual should be free and never violently coerced to follow the moral dictates of society; yet defectives, the illiterate and the incapable who cannot be won to the higher life should be put into institutions under kindly care and allowed to disappear pleasantly from the earth. At last, "there would be a race of whole-men,—a race of artists—a race of supermen such as Nietzsche dreamed of. Then would the Great World Democracy come to pass, uniting all nations and peoples over the whole globe into a harmonious, artistic unit with peace and prosperity and joy for all."

Perhaps it is too much to hope that a philosophic system built around the god idea will be free from contradictions. God always tangles the skein. In this work the section interpreting God is at war with the practical part. When God has for so long been enforcing his will and is now allowing the world "to run along in its perfect way without need of His further manipulation" why should we worry about or hope for the coming of the age of beauty?

The University of Chicago.

A. EUSTACE HAYDON.

FOR WAR-TIME WORSHIP

At the request of the War Service Council of the American Unitarian Association a committee consisting of the Rev. Messrs. Henry Wilder Foote, Palfrey Perkins and Von Ogden Vogt has prepared a service of worship for use in time of war.¹ It is identical in form with the services bound with *Hymns of the Spirit*, and shows the same impeccable literary taste and sure knowledge of the art of worship that have made those services notable. Alternative invocations and litanies, somewhat different in mood, and a generous selection of prayers, make variety possible in frequent usage.

Many churches will find that this service meets their need; no church using *Hymns of the Spirit* should be without it.

SIDNEY B. SNOW

The Meadville Theological School

Chicago, Ill.

¹A SERVICE OF WORSHIP IN TIME OF WAR. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1943. 8 pp. 5 cents.